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# GEOGRAPHICAL NAMING IN THE OLD NORTH-WEST: A STUDY OF THE NAMING OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES BY FUR-TRADERS IN THE WESTERN INTERIOR OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA 1780-1820

BY

(C)

RANDOLPH STEVEN FREEMAN

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Date: 3 April 1985

## ABSTRACT

The primary objectives of this study were to determine, through the examination of relevant fur-trade documents, what geographical names were recorded, and thus presumably used, by the fur-traders of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company during the period of time from 1780 to 1820 in the Western Interior of British North America; what the sources of these names were; how many of these names survived through to the present; what types of geographical features were names being recorded for; in what form were these names recorded; and, any discernable geographical difference in the names and naming.

The hypotheses tested stated that the names of geographical features in the area of study came about as a result of the direct interaction between the fur-traders and the Amerindian people of the area; that these names were either translations, transliterations, or direct usage of the Amerindian names; and, that the names were, in all instances, descriptive of the features to which they applied.

The methodology used to test these hypotheses involved the examination and comparison of the names for 55 geographical features, from the area of study, that were recorded by David Thompson of the North West Company and Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company. An attempt was also made to determine the earliest recorded reference for each of these names. The results of this methodology showed a clear relationship between all names studied and the native language or languages of the area of the feature. It also indicated that the 'survival rate' for these names varied from a low of 52% in the Southern Area to 85% in the

Northern Area; that the majority of names in the Southern Area were recorded only in the native language while the majority of names in the Northern Area were recorded in both translated and non-translated forms; and, that the majority of names recorded in both areas were for water features.

As a result of this study recommendations for further research were made.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Focus of Research

It is widely recognized by both historians and geographers that a large portion of the names of geographical features in North America are of Amerindian origin. These may occur in translated, non-translated and partially translated forms. The most easily recognizable as being of Amerindian origin are those place-names which remain as 'romanized' Native words. The most difficult to recognize as Amerindian would be those names that have been translated directly into either English or French. These names, which make up the highest proportion of names examined in this thesis, are generally indistinguishable from the descriptive names given to features by Europeans during later periods of time.

To date there has been little or no analysis of these Amerindian place-names even though they are presently being used widely by the vast majority of North Americans. Cursory examination of the history of North American exploration and settlement has revealed that many of these place-names of Amerindian origin came to us from that period of time when large portions of the continent were being explored and exploited by European fur traders. Though the history of the fur trade in North America has received a great deal of attention, the historical geography of that period of time has been largely overlooked by scholars until relatively recently.[1] As an aspect of historical geography the toponymy of the fur trade era has never been examined in a scholarly manner.

In the introduction to the 1928 Place-Names of Alberta the Geographic Board of Canada stated that "it is remarkable that the [fur] traders themselves applied names [to geographical features] only when it was absolutely necessary to do so, as when they established trading posts."[2] This statement, though remaining on the record for more than 50 years, has simply been taken for granted by those individuals familiar with the history of Canadian geographical naming. Until now the attempt has not been made to determine if this statement is correct and if so why this relationship existed contrary to the naming practices of later periods in Canada's history.

## Objectives

The primary objectives of this thesis are to determine, through examination of both primary and secondary sources of information, the answers to the following questions:

1. What geographical names were recorded, and thus presumably used, by the fur-traders of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company during the period of time and within the geographical area of this study?
2. What were the sources for these geographical names?
3. What was the "survival rate" for these names?
4. For what types of geographical features (hills, mountains, rivers, creeks, etc) were names being recorded?
5. In what form were these names recorded?

6. Are there any discernable differences, with respect to the above questions, between the names in the forested North compared to the southern grassland region?

7. Can a 'mechanism of transfer' be formulated that adequately explains the means by which the fur-trader/explorer obtained the geographical names that were recorded for features?

Hypotheses

1) That the names of geographical features, in the area of the upper portions of the Saskatchewan and Mackenzie drainage basins (Map #1), came about as a result of the direct interaction between those people employed by the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies and the Amerindian people of the area during the period of time from 1780 to 1820.

2) That the names used by the fur traders for geographical features during this time period and within the area of study were either the translation, transliteration or direct usage of Amerindian place-names.

3) That these Amerindian place-names were, in all cases, descriptive of the features to which they applied.

Sources of Data

The sources of data used for this study included Post Journals and Reports on Districts for those Hudson's Bay Posts, and to a limited extent Northwest Posts, for the area and time frame under study. Of

special interest are the reports and maps from the journals of exploration and survey produced by Peter Fidler, Philip Turnor, David Thompson, Alexander Mackenzie and Peter Pond.[3] This material was examined in its original form in the Hudson's Bay Archives in Winnipeg and in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. Also examined were a number of published sources which more or less faithfully reproduced some of these Journals. Numerous secondary sources of data on the fur trade in the Western Interior of British North America were also examined in the libraries of the University of Alberta and the Department of Culture, Government of Alberta. The most useful of these included both volumes of E. E. Rich's The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870 and J. G. MacGregor's Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822. These latter sources were invaluable for an understanding of the general history of the fur trade which was necessary for the interpretation of data dealing with the toponymy of that era.

## Methodology

Because of large quantity of data available for a study of this nature it was necessary to focus upon some aspect of the fur trade that would provide the most conclusive information possible. To demonstrate that the previously mentioned hypotheses are indeed correct a comparison was made between the surveys of David Thompson of the Northwest Company, and those of Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company. These men were employed as fur traders and surveyors, both beginning as employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. Each received

training as a surveyor under the former Chief Surveyor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Philip Turnor. After seven years' employment with the Hudson's Bay Company David Thompson left to work for the Northwest Company. Thompson conducted surveys in the Western Interior of British North America for the Northwest Company from 1797 to 1812. Fidler conducted surveys for the Hudson's Bay Company in the same area from 1790 to 1822.

It is important to remember that during this period of time there was considerable rivalry between the two companies. It is unlikely that there was any direct communication between Fidler and Thompson, as employees of these rival companies, even though they were conducting surveys in the same area during the same period of time. A. S. Morton in his History of the Canadian West To 1870-71[4] suggests that there was not only business rivalry but a certain amount of personal rivalry between Thompson and Fidler, a suggestion supported by Richard Glover.[5] There is no evidence from the journals of either of these men to indicate that they communicated with each other in any way after their initial periods of training.

If there was no communication between these surveyors and they produced maps of the same area having identical place-names on them then the sources of information for those names must have been the same. There is of course the possibility that information obtained by one surveyor became available to the other by indirect means. The probability that some geographical data may have been exchanged by employees of the rival companies during the social gatherings that occurred between adjacent fur trade posts is negligible. The severity

of the rivalry precluded any serious exchange of information during this period of time. This thesis will demonstrate that the often identical geographical information contained in Thompson's and Fidler's surveys came from the native people inhabiting the area being surveyed. Only when Fidler or Thompson spoke to different Indian groups about the same geographical feature do we see differences in the names for these features.

The surveys of Thompson and Fidler took place over a diversified geographical area. The greatest difference existed between the shortgrass steppe of the southern portion of the area and the partially to heavily forested northern portion. An examination of the names gathered by Fidler and Thompson in each of these areas will reveal any regional differences in the names, the naming practices and the types of features being named. Through direct communication with the natives of the areas being surveyed Fidler and Thompson obtained information on certain characteristics of geograhical features such as the depth of streams, the number and lengths of portages, the wildlife inhabiting the area, whether there were friendly natives living in the area and, of most interest to the toponymist, the 'local' name for the feature. This name, being descriptive in nature, may have incorporated one or more of the previously mentioned characteristics of the feature.

Methodologically this thesis, as an exercise in historical geography, will be a "highly selective account of a postulated past reality."[6] It can be nothing more. Historical research that involves the interpretation of past inter-actions, in this instance

those of the Indian and the Fur-Trader, will always remain speculative at best. As with any credible analysis of historical events this thesis must, to some degree, involve itself with the examination of past human behaviour. It will attempt to interpret the reactions of the fur trader to certain known stimuli. This interpretation will then be analysed spatially to determine regional variations in the processes that created the earliest naming within the area under study.

Endnotes

1. see as examples R.C. Harris and John Warkentin, Canada Before Confederation: A Study in Historical Geography, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974 or Richard I. Ruggles, The Historical Geography and Cartography of the Canadian West 1670-1795, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1958.

2. Geographic Board of Canada, Place-Names of Alberta, Dept. of the Interior, Ottawa, 1928.

3. A brief biography on each of these individuals is given in Appendix 1 of this thesis.

4. A.S. Morton, History of the Canadian West To 1870-71, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Second Edition, 1973, p.447.

5. Richard Glover, David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812, Champlain Society, Toronto, 1962, pp.55-56.

6. Robert F. Berkhofer, A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis; Macmillan Publishing, New York, 1969.

## CHAPTER 2

## THE NATURE OF TOPONYMY

Onamastics, the study of all forms of names, is loosely divided into the study of personal names (anthroponyms) and the study of place-names (toponyms). Toponymy, within this broader field of Onamastics, is essentially "the historical and documentary investigation of the names used in the language of a particular country for the inhabited and formerly inhabited places, uninhabited places and geographical features of that country."[1] The purposes for studying place-names tend to be as varied as the backgrounds of the people studying them. The historian may be interested in studying place-names because they may be indicators of ancient origins of people, the geographer may use place-names to demonstrate patterns of migration, while the sociologist may use them as indicators of past social values. These are the universal traits of place-name studies although it will become evident through closer examination that the reasons for studying place-names and the methodologies for those studies vary considerably from one region to the next. There may even be differences between scholars working within the same region. In recent years toponymy in Canada has taken on a heightened practical usefulness as illustrated in the importance attached to it in the Province of Quebec[2] and in its usefulness in contributing to the resolution of native land claims in the Northwest Territories.[3]

"The main function of geographical names is to ensure the certain identification of places."[4] This remains true whether the place is

being identified orally, in written form, or as an integral part of a map. Our mental perception of a place may be reinforced, as in the case of descriptive names, through the use of a place-name. This name becomes a label that enables us to store and retrieve mental pictures of geographical features. The question 'why was one particular label chosen instead of another?' then becomes the basis for the development of the science of toponymy.

## The Development of Toponymy

The written record of when man first began to study place-names is a subject which as yet remains to be thoroughly explored. P. H. Reaney[5], in his discussion of the origin of English place-names, makes passing reference to place-name origins appearing in the ancient Book of Genesis and also to those appearing in the eighth century writings of the English scholar Bede. During the fifteenth century exaggerated and fanciful stories about the origins of place-names became popular parts of what scholars have come to know as "travellers' tales". Reaney came to the conclusion that "more nonsense has been written on place-names than on any other subject."[6]

One example of a fanciful error in the interpretation of a place-name is the case of Lambeth, England. This name has been interpreted as lama (Mongolian priest) and beth (Semitic for house), when actually it is derived from the Saxon word loam-hithe, meaning 'muddy landing place'.[7] This type of mis-interpretation, not only of place-names within one's own country but also of foreign names, continues to appear in the popular literature of today. This is not

to say that all interpretations of place-names during this early period of time were incorrect, but simply that the methods that were used to determine these origins were often far from exhaustive or scientific.

As a formal discipline, the science of toponymy can be traced to its beginnings in the 1860s in Britain. At this point it was considered to be a sub-discipline of the science of Etymology which is primarily concerned with the study of the origin of words. In 1864 the British canon and scholar Isaac Taylor recognized that the study of place-names was a "task full of difficulties; for they are mostly derived from obscure or unknown languages, and they have suffered more or less from the phonetic changes of so many years."[8] With the early work of Canon Taylor the study of place-names became a philological discipline based on an analysis of the early spellings of names. Taylor's[9] rules for investigating the origin and meaning of place-names were to:

(1) determine the language from which the name was derived.

(2) determine the earliest documentary form of the name, perhaps from the Anglo-Saxon charters or the Domesday Book.

(3) interpret the name using knowledge of ancient grammatical structure and the laws of composition for that language and that time.

(4) examine surrounding names to obtain clues to the origin of the name in question.

In the last decades of the 19th century European scholars, in response to the work of Taylor, began to systematically and scientifically analyze place-names. Taylor's work was especially influential in England where one of the more important contributors to the development of the science of toponymy was Professor W. W. Skeat. With Skeat's pioneer work "place-names study passed at once out of the phase of speculative guesswork and became an exact science."[10] Professor Skeat's major contribution to the field of toponymy was to demonstrate that it is only possible to interpret a place-name satisfactorily if the earliest possible history of that name had been determined. The basic principles laid down by Taylor and Skeat remain as guides for modern European toponymists who look upon place-names as "ancient words or fragments of ancient words - each of them, in short, constituting the earliest chapter in the local history of the places to which they severally refer."[11]

At the same time that Taylor and Skeat were striving towards a more scientific approach to the study of European place-names, scholars in North America were developing a somewhat different focus for the study of North American place-names. These early methodological beginnings in North American 'place-name studies' grew out of a need to map large areas of the North American continent both prior to and during the European settlement of the continent's interior from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. During this time both Canada and the United States established Geographic Boards responsible for the nomenclature on newly produced maps of the interior of the continent.

One of the primary responsibilities of the Geographic Board of Canada, established in 1897, was to review and approve geographical names that were to appear on Federal Government maps. Part of the process involved the examination of names appearing on early maps of Canada. Where discrepancies existed between names appearing on different maps of the same area a decision was made based on communication with local individuals. In the majority of cases the names appearing on these early maps reflected local usage. Many of the early names for geographical features within the thesis study area came to light originally as a result of the work of one man, J. B. Tyrrell of the Geological Survey of Canada. Tyrrell conducted geological surveys in the Districts of Alberta, Assiniboia and Saskatchewan during the 1880s and 1890s. He was responsible for recording and thus perpetuating many of the early fur trade names which might otherwise have been obliterated during the later period of settlement in these Districts.

The examination of place-names by the early Geographic Boards of Canada and the United States was not primarily for the purpose of determining the origins of these names but to establish their location, extent and correct spelling. Their concern was strictly one of data gathering, not the analysis of that data. This latter aspect of the study of place-names, though well developed in Europe by the 1900s, remains largely undeveloped in North America to the present.

## The Structure of Place-Names

The United States Geographic Board and the Geographic Board of

Canada, by the beginning of the 1900s, had recognized the basic structuring of the various types of place-names. A discussion of this structuring is important as it now forms the basis for toponymic research throughout the North American continent. The three major types of place-names are:

A) Descriptive names: "all names which are conferred on account of some characteristic of the place or feature which is named may be regarded as descriptive even though the characteristic may be of minor importance."[12]

B) Non-descriptive names:

1) personal names honouring a great or prominent person or commemorating an early settler.
2) transplanted names - names from another country or place.
3) names commemorating an event or date, usually the date of discovery of the feature or something that happened in association with the feature.
4) religious names - names that reflect affiliations of the early settlers.
5) casual or whimsical names - usually of minor features or small villages.
6) metamorphosed names - usually Anglicized names.

C) Mixed-type names: usually names ending in -burg, -ford, -field, -ham, -ville and preceded by a personal name.

More recently the geographer, Jean Poirier, former Secretary of the Geographic Commission of Quebec, took a different, yet equally

valid approach to defining the various types of North American place-names. Poirier divided all names into either "spontaneous appellations" or "systematic impositions". Spontaneous appellations are those names that came about through local usage while systematic impositions are ones that were given to features by Government authority. Poirier further elaborated on the characteristics of these as follows:

> A) Spontaneous appellations: these are popular creations that came about because of the need, by the people of the area, to differentiate between various features and places. They are often associated with events, first occupants, descriptive characteristics, flora, or fauna.
>
> B) Systematic impositions: there are most often associated with honouring an important individual.[13]

Another attempt at giving some formal structure to the study of place-names was by Mary R. Miller in 1976. Miller, after studying the names and the naming processes of the Northern Neck of Virginia, developed a hypothesis concerning the way in which natural and man-made features were named in the past:

1) "Age of the Red Man" is a period when the Amerindians were the only inhabitants of the area and this represents a time of relative linguistic exclusivity. The Amerindian people were naming physical features, for the most part bodies of water, strictly by descriptive terms. These Indian names "are practical names in that they identify places, and seem to result from a

popular labelling process which aided recognition by the local traveler."

2) "Age of Autocracy" is the period of the first English (or French) naming of features. The naming during this period operated at two levels, the first where "persons of power and stature used naming as a means of glorifying and immortalizing themselves and those closely connected with them" and secondly where local land owners became associated with a feature on or near their land.

3) "Age of Nostalgia" where names from home (in most cases England) were used to identify features in order to make the area feel more like home. These names from home tended to be placed on man-made features such as land patents, political divisions of land, towns, etc.

4) "Romantic Age" that tended to glorify the common person, such as the postmaster or other well known local persons. These names were most often given to populated places.

5) "Age of Public Indifference" was partially produced through an effort to standardize place-names for mapping purposes. This was most often brought about by external (i.e. naming authorities) rather than internal pressures.[14]

This chronological sequence for place-naming would appear to be valid only for the long settled areas of North America. There are some areas, especially in Canada's North, that do not appear to fit well into this sequence, primarily because these areas have only been

sparsely settled. In those areas where Miller's theory could be applied there would be considerable overlap from one period to the next.

The British, or at least the former Secretary of the (British) Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, M. Aurousseau, appear to take exception to what most North Americans would consider to be a geographical name. He stated that "many so-called names of geographical entities are not really names at all . . . 'King George VI Sound' and 'Mount Misery' are dedications . . . 'Bay of Naples' is a mere designation of a thing by reference to something else . . . 'Long Island' is a mere description."[15] Although Aurousseau emphatically states that these are not true names, he goes on to say that for the sake of expediency he will treat them as if they were. Clearly there are perceptual differences between what we believe to be a place-name and what the British believe to be the case. Aurousseau makes the assumption that the reader understands these differences as he does not explain himself any further. One must keep in mind that there are these differences between the British and North American viewpoints of the nature of toponymy, especially when reviewing the British toponymic literature.

## Current Trends in Toponymic Research

Traditionally the toponymist has been interested primarily in determining the meaning and origin of place-names. A major divergence from this has occurred during the last few decades. Toponymists, both European and North American, have begun to emphasize the study of

place-name changes. These changes most often occur when the name is recorded for the first time for mapping purposes. This is particularily the case with native toponyms that were recorded during the early fur trade era. The problems that occur when recording the strictly oral traditions of native languages have always been a concern of the toponymist, the historian, and the linguist.

There also have been many deliberate changes in place-names by Government authorities responsible for naming. A excellent example of this was the changing of the historic name of Castle Mountain to Mount Eisenhower in commemoration of a former United States president. Other changes, more or less unconsciously, have been made by the public throughout the years. Some of the names given to features in Alberta by Captain John Palliser, which appear on his map of 1865 in Volume 59 of the Imperial Blue Books on Affairs Relating to Canada were changed by the early settlers. In most cases these settlers were unaware that they were naming features that had been named previously by members of the Palliser Expedition of 1857-60.

The local people in some areas also on occasion have taken exception to using certain names because of their awkwardness due to excessive length or because of the association of the name with unpleasant happenings or disreputable people. This does not imply that all or even a majority of the place-names in any area have been subject to these transformations. The place-names of Western Canada are, for the most part, relatively young and are being stabilized by Government authority.

The sources of information used by all toponymists are extremely

varied. In North American toponymy "research in the field is the most important aspect."[16] Secondary or follow-up research is conducted through the examination of maps and other written materials available primarily in the archives. The opposite appears to be true with European toponymy. "No [European] place-name student would deny the importance of testing his etymologies on the ground, and if the interpretation proposed does not fit the topography, an explanation must be found or the etymology must be rejected".[17] Field work for the European toponymist is testing, only as a final step, the etymological interpretation of the name. Emphasis, in North American toponymy, is placed on the gathering of information in the field as a first step. This is a reflection not only of the relative ages of European and North American toponyms but also because, if it is the function of maps to reflect reality, then toponyms must be a part of that reality. Names are given to features in order thay they may be referred to in an unambiguous manner; if maps do not show the correct toponyms then the purpose of those maps has been defeated. "If public practice indicates that a name other than the officially approved one has become accepted and used the realistic approach dictates that it should be changed in the official records and this action publicized."[18] North American toponymy is "still basically oriented around research into what the name for a feature is rather than what the etymology of the word is.

Another approach to the study of place-names has come to light in the Soviet geographical literature. V. D. Belen'kaya, in his article "Current Tendencies in the Naming of Places"[19] focuses attention on

the synchronic analysis approach to handling geographical names. This approach deals with the function of names in society and on the perception of names by members of society. "The net effect is to ignore the etymology of a name since the latter does not affect the actual functioning of a place-name."[20] Etymology is the basis of European toponymy and is usually the only means by which the origin of place-names in Europe can be determined. The Soviets, by ignoring etymology, have produced a handling of place-names which superficially appears to be closely related to North American toponymy. The Soviets' 'new toponymy', as reflected in Belen'kaya's article, shows a tendency towards:

1) the changing of names having negative connotations,

2) the changing of names whose "internal form does not convey clear meaning at the present time"[21], and

3) the elimination of duplication, usually by addition of a qualifier to the name.

This has resulted in more than 50% of new names being anthroponyms, while the remainder of new place-names tend to be descriptive of their situation or function. Names having positive connotations are also very popular in the U.S.S.R. These tendencies in Soviet place-naming appear to follow the patterns being established in the Western World. We also emphasize anthroponyms, descriptive names, and names having positive connotations. Closer examination of both Soviet and North American place-names would probably show a marked difference in the degree to which these tendencies have occurred. Belen'kaya concludes his article by stating that in the

Soviet Union "the method of place-name analysis at the synchronic level needs to be used more widely together with other techniques as one of the effective means of identifying the actual functioning of geographical names."[22]

Changes in the purpose and function of place-names in North America also appear to be taking place. Until recently the purpose of the toponymist was to supplement the work of the cartographer. In 1962 Wilber Zelinsky[23] recognized that even though place-names are essential to the cartographer, "of even greater importance are the complex, unchartered inter-relationships among place-names and other phases of culture and the possibility that their study may illuminate significant aspects of American cultural history and geography."[24]

## The Approach

William F. Ganong[25], in his 1911 paper on the study of native place-names of the Maritime Provinces, stated that the purpose for examining these place-names was to suggest a methodology by which the native place-names of the remainder of Canada could be examined. Ganong recognized three stages in the 'progress of knowledge' of native place-names and indicated that the third stage is the recommended methodology:

> 1. The Conventional Stage - In this the forms and interpretations of Indian place-names given by authorities popularly considered the best are accepted without question, and if authorities differ then there is general acceptance of the forms which are most pleasing to the imagination.
> 2. The Interrogational Stage - In this the attempt is made to collect all of the available forms and interpretations of the words, and such other information it bears upon the subject; then any agreement exhibited by the data is accepted without

> further analysis as expressing the truth, or the probable truth.
> 3. The Investigational Stage - In this the strictly scientific method of induction is followed . . . all possible sources of information are searched . . . particular importance is attached to data from original and disinterested sources . . . [26]

This "investigational stage", in which emphasis is placed on examination of original sources of information, is the one which has been closely followed in the analysis of the geographical names of the two areas under study.

This methodology is used in this thesis to demonstrate that, in the vast majority of cases, the fur traders who operated in the Western Interior during the period of time from 1780 to 1820 adopted native place-names or translations of native place-names for their own use. The major way in which this is demonstrated is by noting all geographical names used by David Thompson and Peter Fidler within the thesis areas for which the modern feature could be determined. Additional information on each name was gathered through the examination of Post Journals, District Reports and other relevant fur trade documents to determine the most plausible explanation of the origin of each name. There were very few geographical names mentioned by Thompson and Fidler that could not be matched to a modern feature. One example of a name that could not be matched with a feature is the name "Aquaqe-a-pers Sack-a-ha-gan" mentioned by Peter Fidler in his Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806[27] as being "up the Beaver River". The last portion of the name is the Cree word for lake while the first portion does not have, according to Dr. Anne Anderson, a Cree language specialist with the Metis Association of Alberta, any meaning in the Cree language. All we know of this feature is that it

is a lake in the region of the Beaver River in east central Alberta. In almost all instances where geographical names were mentioned by either Thompson or Fidler the specific feature could be found and the official name determined. All references to geographical features in this thesis are made through the name that is officially recognized by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. All unofficial names appear in quotation marks.

Endnotes

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4. Aurousseau, op. cit., p.78.
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6. Ibid., p.1.
7. Isaac Taylor, Words and Places: Illustrations of History, Ethnology and Geography, 1864 (Reprinted in 1978 by E.P. Publishing Ltd., England), p.25.
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14. Mary R. Miller, "Place-names of the Northern Neck of Virginia: a proposal for a theory of place-naming", Names, Vol.24, No.1, March 1976, pp.14-15.

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16. Poirier, op. cit., p.44.

17. Reaney; op. cit., p.19.

18. J.K. Fraser, "The realistic approach to geographical names in Canada", Cahiers de Geographie de Quebec, Vol.10, No.20, 1966, p.235.

19. V.D. Belen'kaya, "Current Tendencies in the Naming of Places: on the synchronic approach to place names", Soviet Geography, Vol.16, No.5, May 1975, pp.315-320.

20. Ibid., p.315.

21. Ibid., p.316.

22. Ibid., p.320.

23. Wilbur Zelinsky, "Generic Terms of the Place-Names of the Northeastern United States" in Readings in Cultural Geography edited by P.L. Wagner and M.W. Mikesell, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962.

24. Ibid., p.129.

25. William F. Ganong, "An Organization of the Scientific Investigation of the Indian Place-nomenclature of the Maritime Provinces of Canada", Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third Series-Volume V, 1911, pp. 179-193.

26. Ibid., pp.179-180.

27. Peter Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, E3/1, folio 36, Manitoba Provincial Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Subsequent references to material housed in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives will appear as "HBC" plus the catalogue reference number.

## CHAPTER 3

## GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SETTING

The parameters of this thesis can be defined, both temporally and spatially, by a sequence of historical events that occurred in the development of what is now known as Western Canada. During the one hundred years prior to the 1770s there occurred a sequence of events that were to lead to distinctive geographical naming practices during the four decades following the 1770s. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that during the period of time from approximately 1780 through to 1820, the naming of geographical features in the Western Interior of British North America occurred in a manner unique to that time period. This uniqueness stems from the fact that the fur traders and explorers of the area did not name geographical features but simply adopted, and to some extent modified, the names being used by the native population. To understand the way in which geographical features were being named within the area and time period under study it is essential that these historic events and the geographical context in which they occurred be fully understood.

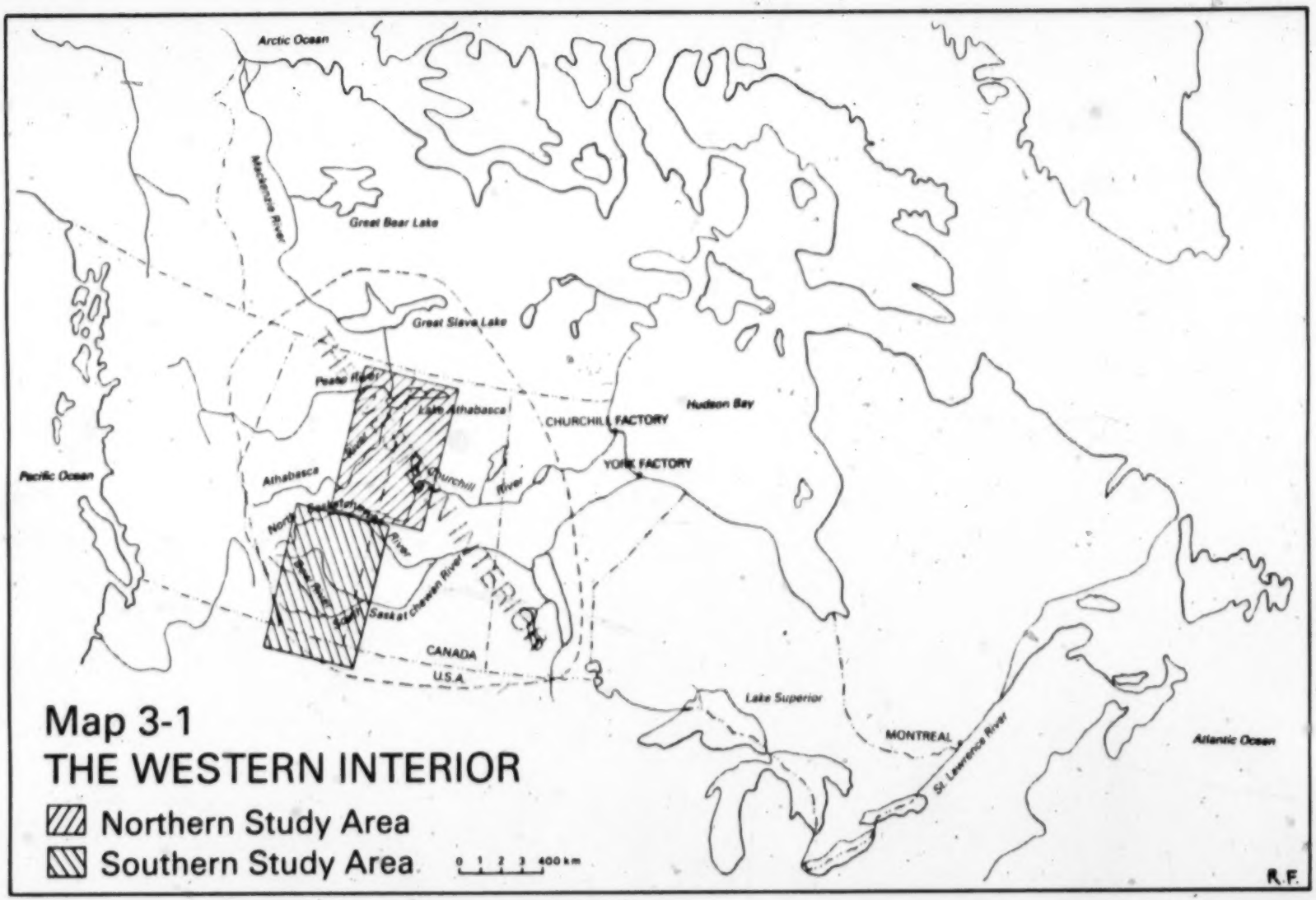
Various scholars, in particular the historical geographers John Warkentin and Richard Ruggles, have struggled with what name to use when referring to Western Canada during its historic fur trade era, roughly the period of time from 1780 to 1820. When referring to the historic fur trade era Ruggles stated that "there was no such region as Western Canada, but only a congeries of various ill-defined spaces which bore various names such as le Pays d'en Haut, Rupert's Land, the West Main,

the North Main, Buffalo Country, and so on".[1] Ruggles does not suggest which of these terms best describes the region historically.

Warkentin, in his introduction to The Western Interior of Canada,[2] also deals with the problem of what to call the region. He indicates that traditionally the fur traders used the term 'North-West' to designate the area but that this is no longer valid because it is being used to describe the Mackenzie and Yukon basins. As indicated by the title of his book, Warkentin chose to use the term 'Western Interior of Canada'. This term, though descriptive of the area from a modern perspective, does not describe the area in historic terms. Any term used to describe accurately the area under study would have to include reference to the fact that the area was part of British North America; that it was north-west of the British colonies on the eastern coast of North America; that it occupied a portion of the vast interior plain stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean; and that it was also a part of the rugged Canadian Shield surrounding Hudson Bay. In any practical sense it would be impossible to include all of the above in a single usable descriptive term. For the purposes of this thesis the area will simply be referred to as the 'Western Interior.'(Map 3-1)

## The Geographical Setting

The specific area under study in this thesis is not the total area of the Western Interior. Instead, it includes only the upper portions of the Mackenzie, Saskatchewan, and the Churchill drainage basins. The upper portion of the Mackenzie system is made up of the Slave River, Peace River, Athabasca River and Lake, Lesser Slave Lake, Lac la Biche


Arctic Ocean
Mackenzie River
Great Bear Lake
Great Slave Lake
Peace River
Lake Athabasca
Hudson Bay
CHURCHILL FACTORY
YORK FACTORY
Pacific Ocean
Athabasca
Churchill River
Saskatchewan River
CANADA
U.S.A.
Lake Superior
MONTREAL
St. Lawrence River
Atlantic Ocean
Map 3-1
THE WESTERN INTERIOR
Northern Study Area
Southern Study Area
0 1 2 3 400 km
R.F.

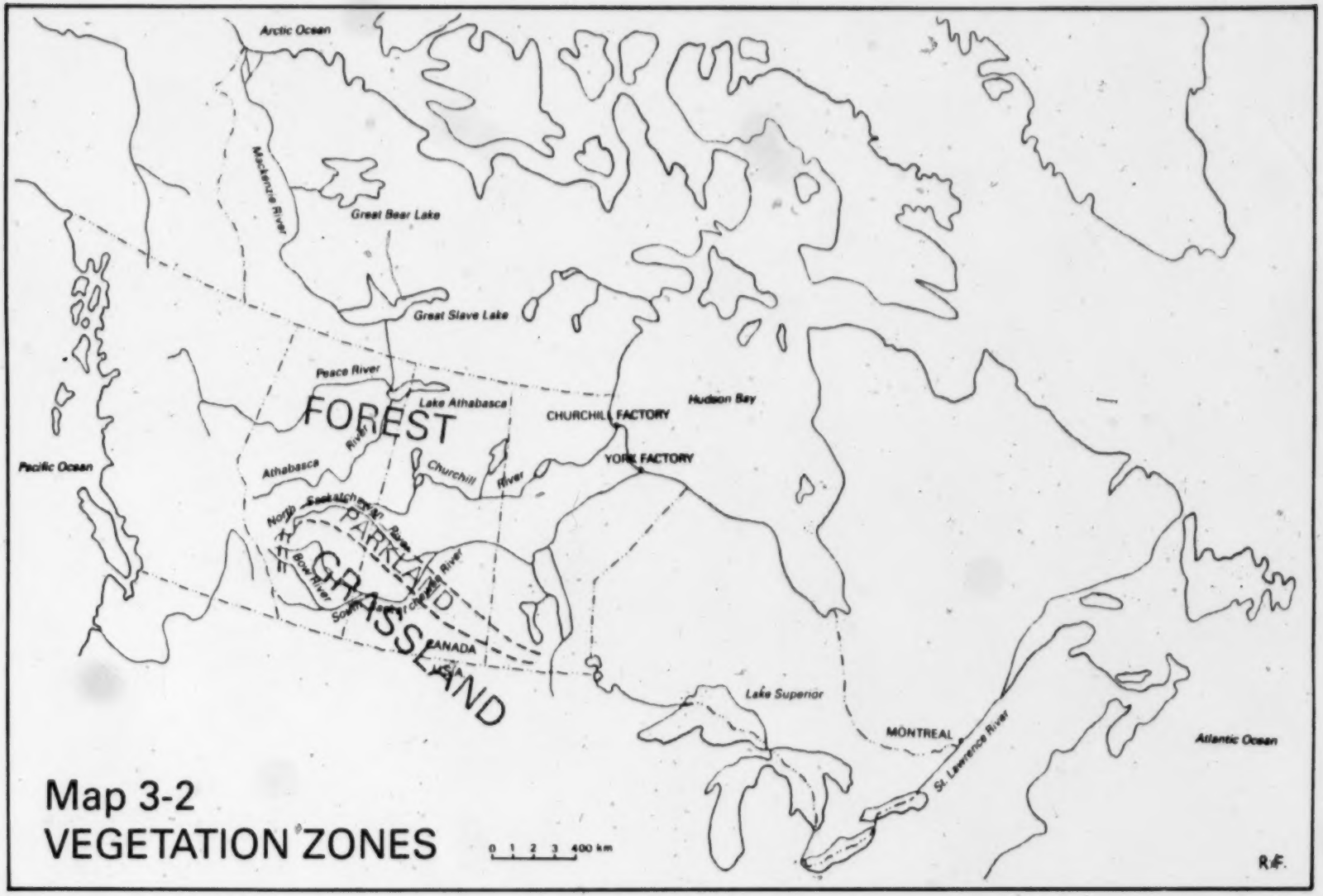
and numerous smaller rivers, creeks, and lakes. The upper reaches of the Saskatchewan drainage basin include the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, Battle River, Red Deer River, Bow River, Oldman River, and a myriad of smaller lakes and streams. Also included within the study area is a small portion of the Churchill drainage system represented by the Beaver and La Loche Rivers.

Cole Harris and John Warkentin, in their book Canada Before Confederation: A Study in Historical Geography[3], stated that "central to an understanding of the geography of the interior is the existence of two contrasting natural realms, grassland and forest, and the transition zone between them of aspen groves and prairie meadows - a belt of parkland up to one hundred miles wide."[4]

The interior to which Harris and Warkentin refer stretches from Hudson Bay on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west and from 49° North to 60° North. Other scholars, in particular Ruggles, have tended to include in their descriptions of the Western Interior large areas north of 60°. Regardless of its extent, the fact remains that the Western Interior is made up of three distinct vegetation zones: forest, parkland and grasslands. The area of study for this thesis, though considerably less than the total area of the Western Interior, does cover portions of each of these three regions.(Map 3-2)

## Forest

The forest region, which makes up not only the largest portion of the Western Interior, is also its most northerly. It is considered distinctive because of the presence of large areas covered by coniferous




Map 3-2
VEGETATION ZONES

trees (Jack Pine, Black Spruce, Tamarack) interspersed with smaller areas of deciduous trees (Poplar, Aspen). The presence of large game animals, at least when compared to the Parkland or grasslands, could only be considered as sparse.[5] While animals such as Wood Bison, Deer, Elk, Woodland Caribou, and Moose were found throughout the forested region of the Western Interior there were much higher populations of small game animals such as rabbit and beaver. Most importantly for the Amerindians, at least as a source of food, was the presence of large numbers of fish in the numerous lakes and streams in the region.

Climatically the forest region is the coldest and most moist of the three vegetation regions of the Western Interior. The winters tend to be long and cold with few breaks from the sub-zero temperatures. The summer is usually short and relatively cool compared to the more southerly portions of the Western Interior. Even though the forest region receives only marginally more precipitation than the Prairie or Parkland the relatively cooler year-round temperatures result in a slower rate of evaporation and thus more water is available for vegetation growth.

One of the most important factors that influenced the landscape of the Forest Region is the presence, at least in the northeastern half of the Western Interior, of a wide band of glaciated metamorphic rocks commonly refered to as the Canadian Shield. The surface of this area, which extends from Hudson Bay to within seven hundred kilometres of the Rocky Mountains, is most commonly characterized by its "interrupted and disorganized drainage pattern."[6]

Grasslands

The Grasslands Region is characterized by the presence of a gradation from short grass in the driest central portion to long grass in the less dry areas nearest the Parkland. Within the former section sage and cactus also occur along with areas of willow and cottonwood trees adjacent to permanent bodies of water. In direct contrast with the Forest Region there existed on the Grasslands relatively few small game animals but large numbers of Plains Bison, Antelope, and Elk.

The climate of the Grasslands Region is characterized by hot, dry summers and winters that alternate between extreme cold and relative warmth. This is the result of a constantly fluctuating Arctic cold front which allows warm Pacific air to occasionally enter the region from the west. The small amount of precipitation that does fall within the Grasslands Region tends to evaporate quickly due to the excessive heat of summer and the drying winds of winter.

Geologically the Grasslands Region is underlain by flat-lying sedimentary beds capped by glacial till and glacio-lacustrine deposits. The landscape, having developed on these generally flat-lying deposits, is one that presents a more regular drainage pattern than that of the area underlain by the Canadian Shield. The rivers, many of which have their headwaters in the glaciers of the Rocky Mountains to the west, meander gently across the plains within deeply incised valleys. Some of these valleys functioned during the last period of continental glaciation as large spillway channels for glacial meltwater. Today large numbers of these spillway valleys do not contain rivers or are drained only by small

misfit streams. These spillway channels are steep sided, deep, flat bottomed valleys, many of which exceed one kilometre in width. Even though the amount of annual rainfall for the Grasslands Region is small, there does exist some free-standing water, at least during the spring and early summer months, in the numerous sloughs which are not part of any integrated drainage system. The seasonal presence of free-standing bodies of water, a dependable supply of water in the glacially fed rivers of the region, along with the grass, enabled large herds of Bison to thrive on what would otherwise have been an inhospitable landscape.

## Parkland

The Parkland Region is a transitional vegetation zone, situated between the Grassland and the Forest Regions, which incorporated characteristics of both these regions. This is an area where the "prairie" presents a slow gradation, over perhaps serveral hundred kilometres, from grassland into a forest dominated by coniferous trees. The more southerly parts of the Parkland would contain large areas of grass with small stands of aspen and poplar, the latter generally close to the numerous sloughs that dot the prairie landscape. The more northerly areas would be characterized by small prairie meadows located within nearly contiguous stands of aspen and poplar. In contrast to the short grasslands of the semi-arid south, the grasses here were much taller.

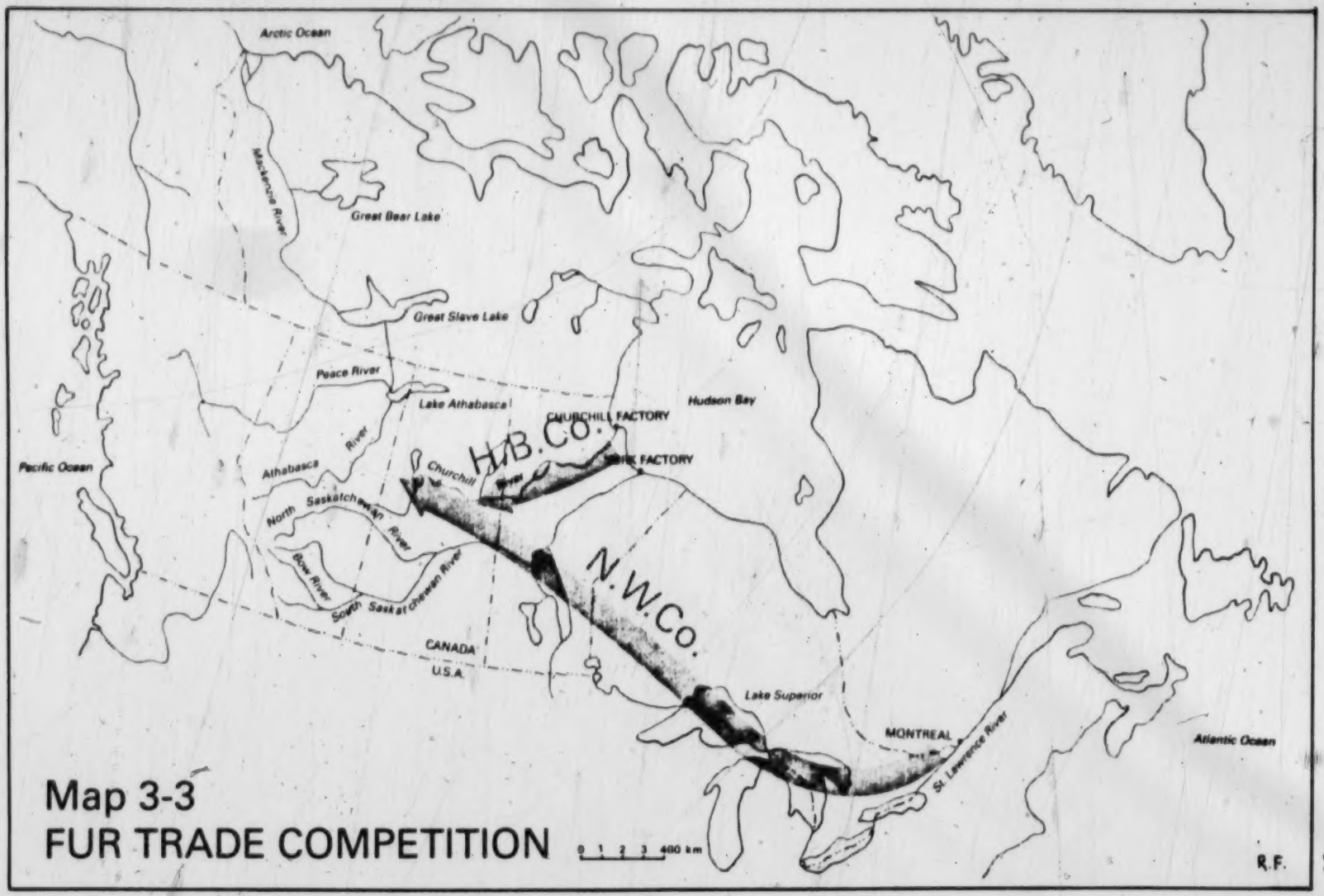
## The Historical Setting

In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company, a British fur trading company, was

given the exclusive right to all trade and commerce within those lands drained by rivers flowing into Hudson Bay and which had not been granted to or possessed by other 'Christian' states. The means by which trade was conducted between the employees of the Company and the Amerindian people of the region was relatively simple. Trading posts were established on Hudson Bay at the mouths of the major rivers that emptied into the Bay. Here the Company 'servants' waited for the native people to bring their furs to exchange for European manufactured goods. This system of trade did not require the traders to have an intimate knowledge of the Interior.

During the one hundred years prior to the 1770s, when the English had established a trading system based on Hudson Bay, the French were establishing a trading system based on the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. This system, based on travel by the French into the Interior to trade directly with the natives, was developed primarily as a result of the distance between the area where the furs were trapped by the natives and the established French colony on the St. Lawrence. The natives would never have considered undertaking such a trip to obtain European goods when travel to the Bay was, by comparison, relatively simple. As illustrated by Map 3-3 there quite naturally developed a certain amount of competition between the two trading systems. As the French moved farther inland beyond the Great Lakes they began to trade with Natives who would normally have taken their furs to the English on the Bay.

During the 1740s, in direct response to the French interference with their established trade linkages, the English began to travel inland not




Map 3-3
FUR TRADE COMPETITION

to trade directly with the Natives but to attempt to convince them to continue coming to the Bay to trade. This travel inland established a condition of dependence by the English on the geographical knowledge of the Amerindian people who were their guides on these early trips. This dependence on geographical knowledge, which the French had developed at an early stage in their trade, was to continue to grow in importance as the competition between the two trading systems increased.

The Metis

The two trading systems, one based on Hudson Bay and the other on the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes, were well established by the mid-1700s. Within each system there emerged a distinctive set of communities known as "Freemen". These individuals were the result of the 'marriage' of migrant males and indiginous Indian females. The resulting communities were often referred to as 'halfbreed' within the N.W. Co. trading system and 'metis' within the French system. These individuals were to play an increasingly important role in the fur trade as the intermediaries between the European and Amerindian people. Within the Hudson Bay trading system these people were a result of the interaction between the Crees living near the Company posts on the Bay, often referred to as the 'Homeguard Crees', and the English employees of the Company. Within the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes trading system the mixed-bloods were a result of the interaction between the French 'voyageur' and the various native groups with whom they associated. In each trading system the mixed-bloods became the buffer between the vastly different cultures of the European fur trader and the Amerindian people.

The Move Inland

In 1759 the French were defeated on the Plains of Abraham and with this defeat their long established trading system collapsed. For the Hudson's Bay Company, the defeat of the French made it appear that they would once again have exclusive rights to the fur trade in British North America. It quickly became apparent that the English of the Hudson Bay trading system faced even stiffer competition in the Interior as the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes trading system was taken over by the Colonial British of Canada. These Colonial British were often referred to by the English on Hudson Bay as 'pedlars'.

During the early 1760s attempts were made by the Governors of the Hudson's Bay Company at regulating the fur trade within the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes trading system. These regulations were meant to lessen the effects of competition on the profitability of the trade. By the mid-1760s it became apparent that any regulations concerning the fur trade in the Interior would be impossible to enforce. In April of 1768 the fur trade was declared unrestricted and open. This move resulted in very extensive competition between the Hudson Bay British and the Colonial British of Montreal. It forced the Governors of the Hudson's Bay Company to reconsider their policy of waiting on the Bay for natives to bring their furs in for trade. The natives were able to obtain European trade goods from the pedlars without having to travel great distances to the Bay.

In 1774 Samuel Hearne established the first inland post for the Hudson's Bay Company. This post, called Cumberland House, was

established on a lake now referred to as Cumberland Lake, a part of the Saskatchewan drainage system. The establishment of this inland post represented a major shift in trading policy by the Hudson's Bay Company. More importantly, at least as far as this thesis is concerned, it represents a major change in the degree to which the English depended upon the native people of the Interior. Prior to moving inland the English could be supplied with a certain amount of their provisions directly from England. There was some food supplied by the 'Homeguard' Indians living close to the posts on the Bay. The British were not totally dependent upon these natives for their survival prior to moving inland. After establishing posts in the Interior, the English found that these posts had to be supplied with a reliable source of provisions. It was into this provisioning niche that the 'upland' Crees, who had previously played the role of middlemen in the trade on the Bay, found themselves thrust. Arthur Ray, in his 1972 article published in the Canadian Geographer, examines the changes that occurred in the annual Cree cycle of activity with the establishment of inland posts by the Hudson's Bay Company. Ray suggests that prior to the 1760s a typical band of Cree Indians would have spent each winter hunting bison and trapping furs in the parkland belt and as the spring approached they would have moved back to the forest to fish and build canoes in preparation for the long summer trip to the Bay. The return trip to the parkland took place during the fall. Ray goes on to state that:

> although the above observations are limited to groups which had direct trading contact with the Hudson's Bay Company posts, there is evidence which indicates that the seasonal movements of groups back and forth between the parklands and woodlands were common to other bands as well.[7]

These seasonal movements over long distances by the Cree Indians were dependent upon a highly developed geographical knowledge of the Western Interior.

In 1783 the Colonial British of Canada banded together to form the North West Company. This proved to be a significant escalation in the competition between the two trading systems. As a direct result of this fierce competition for the furs of the Natives inhabiting the Western Interior there developed, within both trading systems, the need to obtain "exclusive" knowledge of the Interior and thus to gain some advantage in the trade. "For trade to be carried out efficiently, it soon became imperative that accurate maps be drawn, showing routes and location of posts".[8]

In 1778, perhaps in anticipation of this problem, the Hudson's Bay Company hired a surveyor named Philip Turnor. With his hiring "the Hudson's Bay Company introduced high cartographic standards to the charting of the Western Interior of Canada".[9] After a number of years surveying on his own in the Western Interior Turnor took on a young man named David Thompson as an apprentice. Thompson had been recruited by the Hudson's Bay Company in England in 1784 while only 14 years of age. From 1784 to 1788 Thompson spent time at Churchill Factory, York Factory, Manchester House, Cumberland House and, most importantly, the winter of 1788 with the Piegan Indians on the grasslands. In late 1788 Thompson broke his leg. The break was very severe and took several years to mend. It was during this period of time when he was unable to participate in the rigorous work of the fur trade that he began his training as a surveyor under Philip Turnor.

In 1790, with the anticipated move of the Hudson's Bay Company into the Athabasca country, Philip Turnor was instructed to begin surveys in that area. Turnor delayed beginning these surveys untill the fall of 1790. This delay was probably related to the need for Thompson's leg to heal completely. By September of 1790 it became apparent that Thompson would not be able to assist Turnor on the survey of the Athabasca country. Turnor was forced to take a young man named Peter Fidler.

Fidler, who had signed with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1788 as a labourer, spent his first summer's employment at York Factory. In 1789 he was sent inland to Manchester House and subsequently in December of 1789 sent to South Branch House as a "writer". It is obvious from this that he must have received a better than average education while in England. It was a combination of his education and mathematical aptitude that enabled him to begin, in May of 1790, training as a surveyor under Philip Turnor. With only a few months' training Fidler was chosen, over the still crippled Thompson, to assist Turnor in his survey of the Athabasca country. Thompson had spent more than a year in preparation for the Athabasca survey, and it was simply through bad luck that he was passed over for this task. It is not difficult to image a certain amount of personal animosity between Fidler and Thompson as a result.

Fidler spent almost two years in the Athabasca country, returning to York Factory in the summer of 1792. In the fall of 1792 he was sent inland to winter with the Piegan Indian in the area south and west of modern-day Calgary. This is another instance where David

Thompson had been passed over for an important surveying task. During the time when Fidler was on the Plains Thompson conducted some additional surveys in the Athabasca Country. Thompson failed to complete his survey of an alternate route to Lake Athabasca and appears to have lost the support of his employers. In 1797 he left the Hudson's Bay Company to become head surveyor for the North West Company, a position which he held till 1811. Fidler continued to work for the Hudson's Bay Company, surveying the area around Lac la Biche in 1799, building Chesterfield House on the South Saskatchewan River in 1800 and conducting additional surveys around Fort Chipewyan between 1802 and 1806. Fidler retired from the fur trade in 1822.

Fidler and Thompson, during their overlapping years of employment by the Hudson's Bay Company had, as nearly as can be determined from the surviving evidence, direct contact with each other only during a few short months in the summer of 1790. There is no indication from the journals of either of these individuals that they were aware of each other's presence in the Western Interior. This thesis will in part base some of its conclusions upon the assumption that both personal rivalry, and rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, kept these two men from communicating directly with each other.

In Chapter Four it will be shown that while conducting surveys of the same areas and, on occasion, during the roughly the same period of time, Thompson and Fidler used, in almost all cases, the same geographical names for the features they were surveying. If there was no direct communication between these two men, then the common source

of geographical information must have been the Amerindian people who guided each of these surveyors. This information was critical to the success of the trade within any given area and it is thus unlikely that this information was exchanged between the employees of these rival companies.

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2. John Warkentin(ed), The Western Interior of Canada, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1964.

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4. Ibid., p.233.

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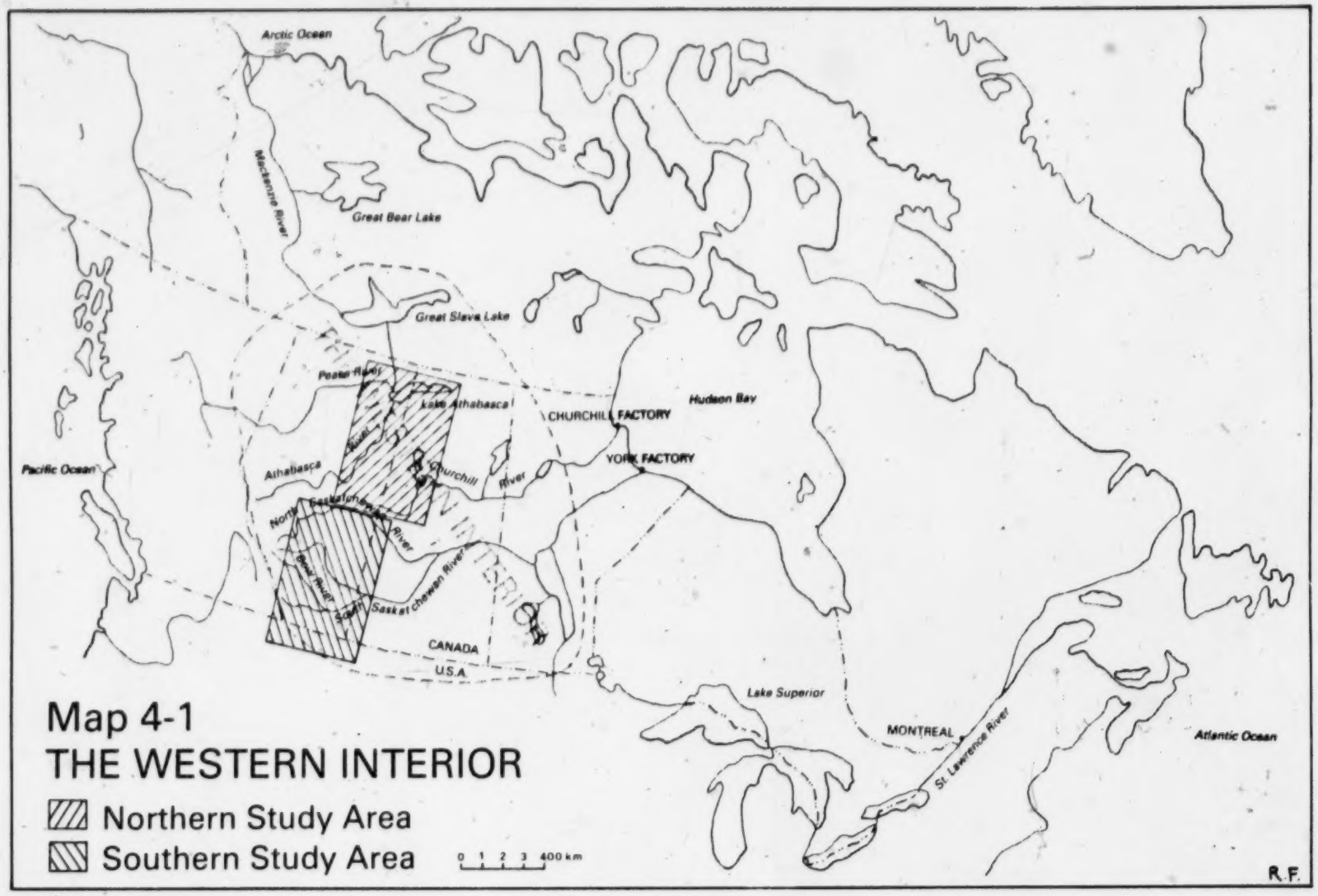
9. Ibid., p.66.

## Chapter 4

## GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES ANALYSIS

The format for the presentation of data, which makes up the bulk of this chapter, is to review the names alphabetically by their official name, first for the southern area and then for the northern area (Map 4-1). After each name is the number or numbers for the maps upon which each feature appears. The latitude and longitude for each feature, taken from the current Gazetteer of Canada Series for Alberta and Saskatchewan, is also given. The historic names, as they appear in the Journals and on the maps of Peter Fidler and David Thompson, are then discussed in detail. The decision to examine two separate areas within the three natural vegetation zones of the Western Interior was primarily based upon the desire to simplify the analysis of the data. The Northern Section is made up mostly of forest with a small amount of parkland while the Southern Section covers primarily grassland with a small area of parkland. The assumption was made that the greatest differences in names and naming would occur between the Forest Region and the Grassland Region, not between these and the Parkland Region.

Following the presentation of data for each area there appear a number of tables. These tables, numbered one through seven, are an attempt to graphically illustrate the correlation between the names shown by Thompson and Fidler; between the modern and historic names; and, most importantly, between these names and the native language of the area in which they are found.


Arctic Ocean
Mackenzie River
Great Bear Lake
Great Slave Lake
Peace River
Lake Athabasca
Hudson Bay
CHURCHILL FACTORY
YORK FACTORY
Pacific Ocean
Athabasca
Churchill River
North Saskatchewan River
South Saskatchewan River
CANADA
U.S.A.
Lake Superior
MONTREAL
St. Lawrence River
Atlantic Ocean
Map 4-1
THE WESTERN INTERIOR
Northern Study Area
Southern Study Area
0 1 2 3 400 km
R.F.

## Southern Area

### Beaver Creek (Map 4-2)

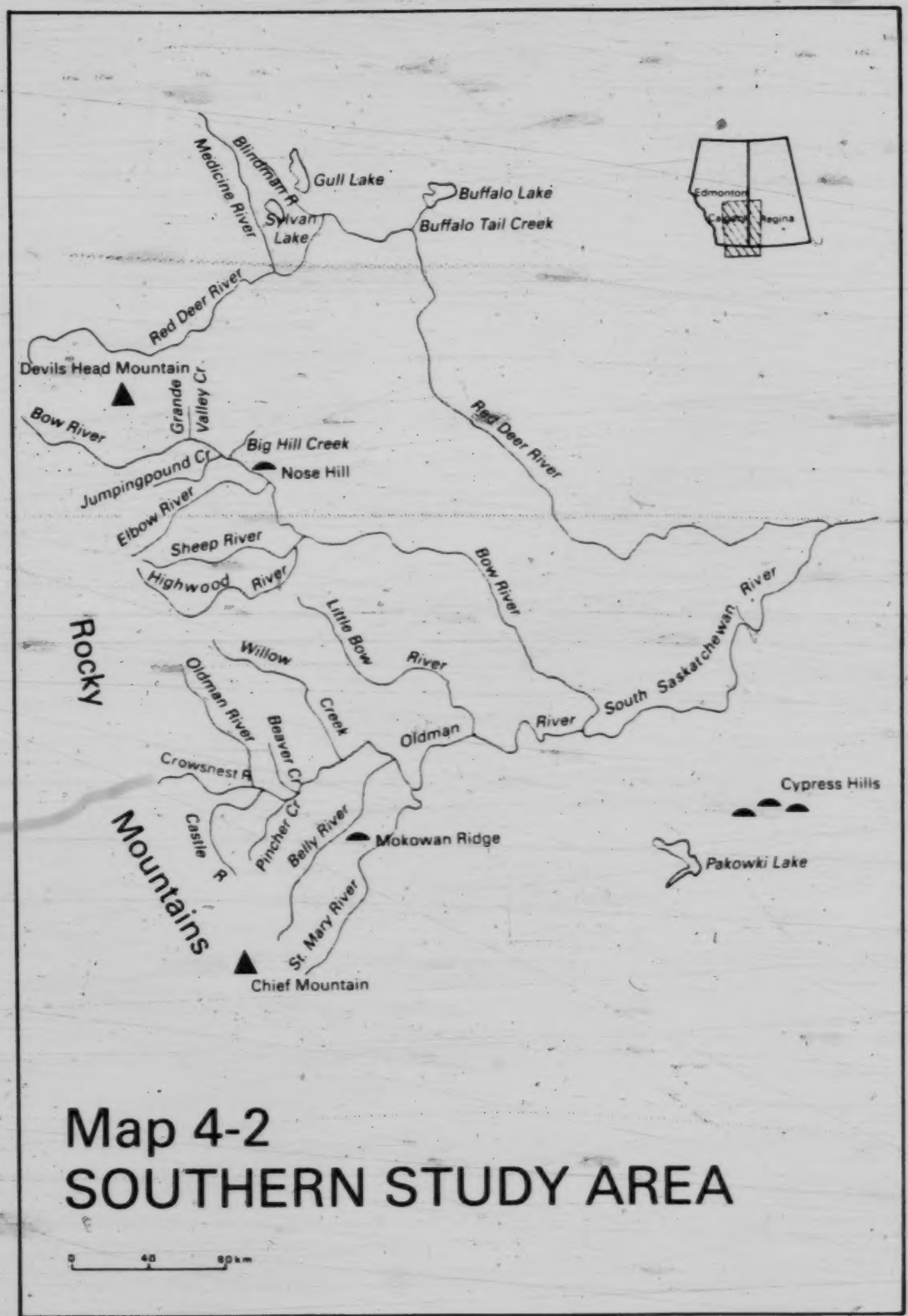
49° 38' North 113° 42' West

Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[1](Map 4-3) labels this creek as "Steep rock river" with the added notation "where Buffalo fall before and break their skulls in pieces". This same name is also shown on a similar map of the area in Fidler's Chipewyan Journal[2](Map 4-4). It is likely that this Indian map is the original and was subsequently copied into his 1789-1804 Journal

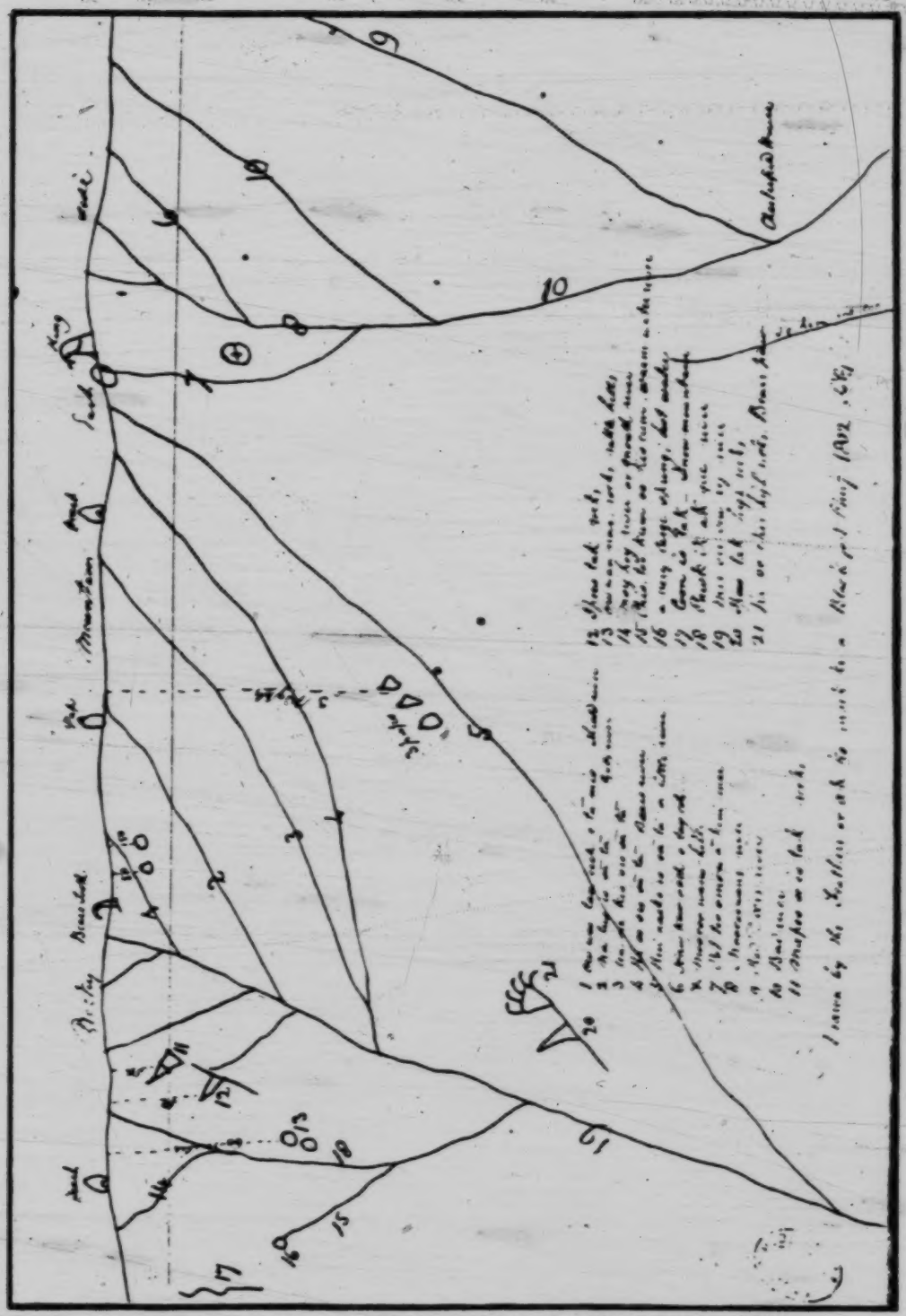
This creek is very close to a major bison kill site currently known as "Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump". This jump, which consists of a steep cliff over which bison were driven to their deaths, was likely still functioning when Peter Fidler visited the area in 1801 and 1802. Considering the name and its qualifier it is likely a translation of a Blackfoot name describing the creek in relation to the nearby kill site. Fidler does not directly mention this kill site although he does describe several other sites in the general area.

The explanation of the origin of the name Beaver Creek, as given in Place Names of Alberta[3] is that it is a translation of the Blackfoot name "kakghikstakiskway" which literally means "where the beaver cuts wood". The Blackfoot word for Beaver is "ksiskstaki"[4].

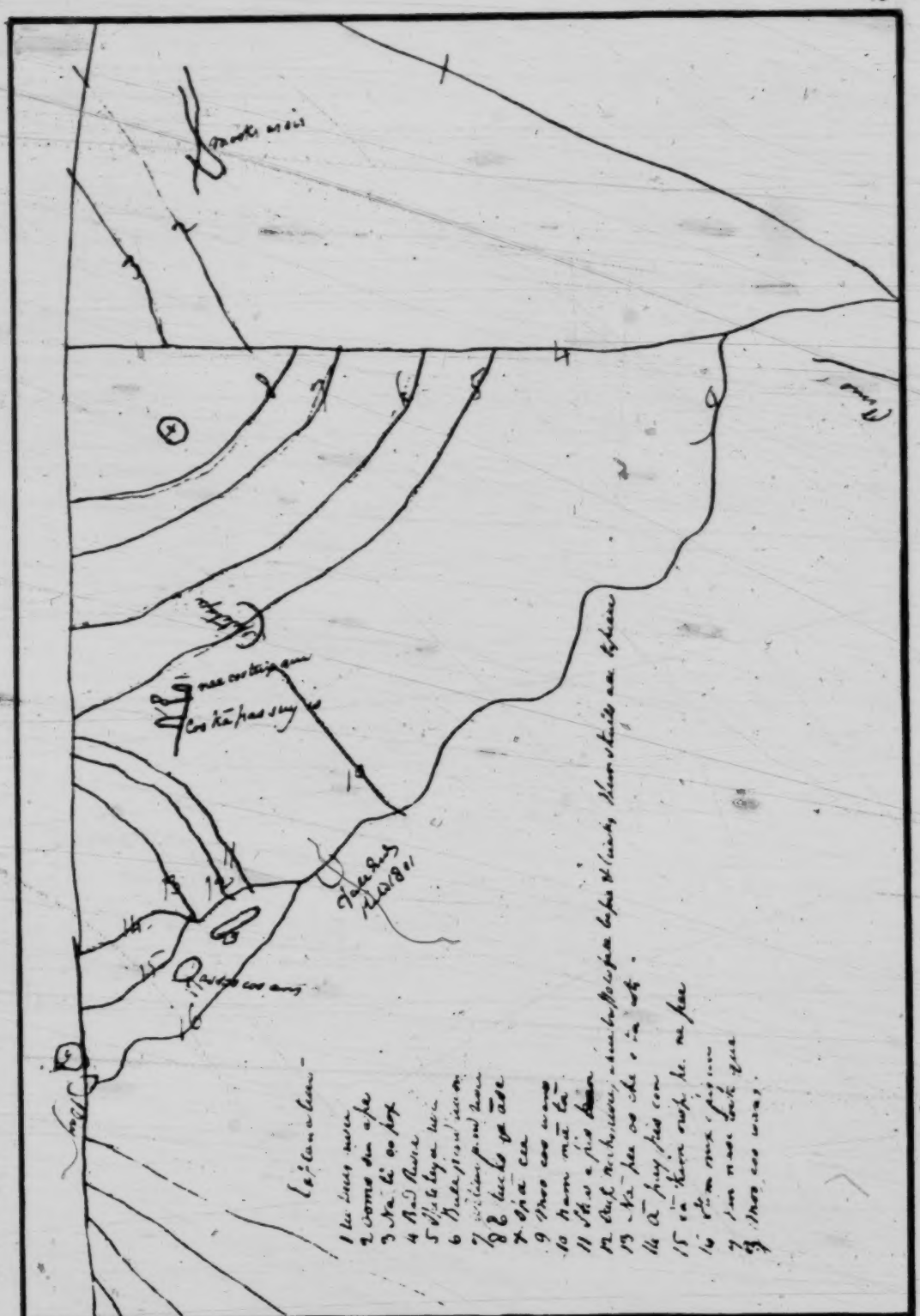
David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.




# Map 4-2
# SOUTHERN STUDY AREA



Map 4-3 Indian Map Drawn by Ak ko wee ak a Blackfoot Indian 1802
(Hudson's Bay Company Archives E.3/2 fo. 104)



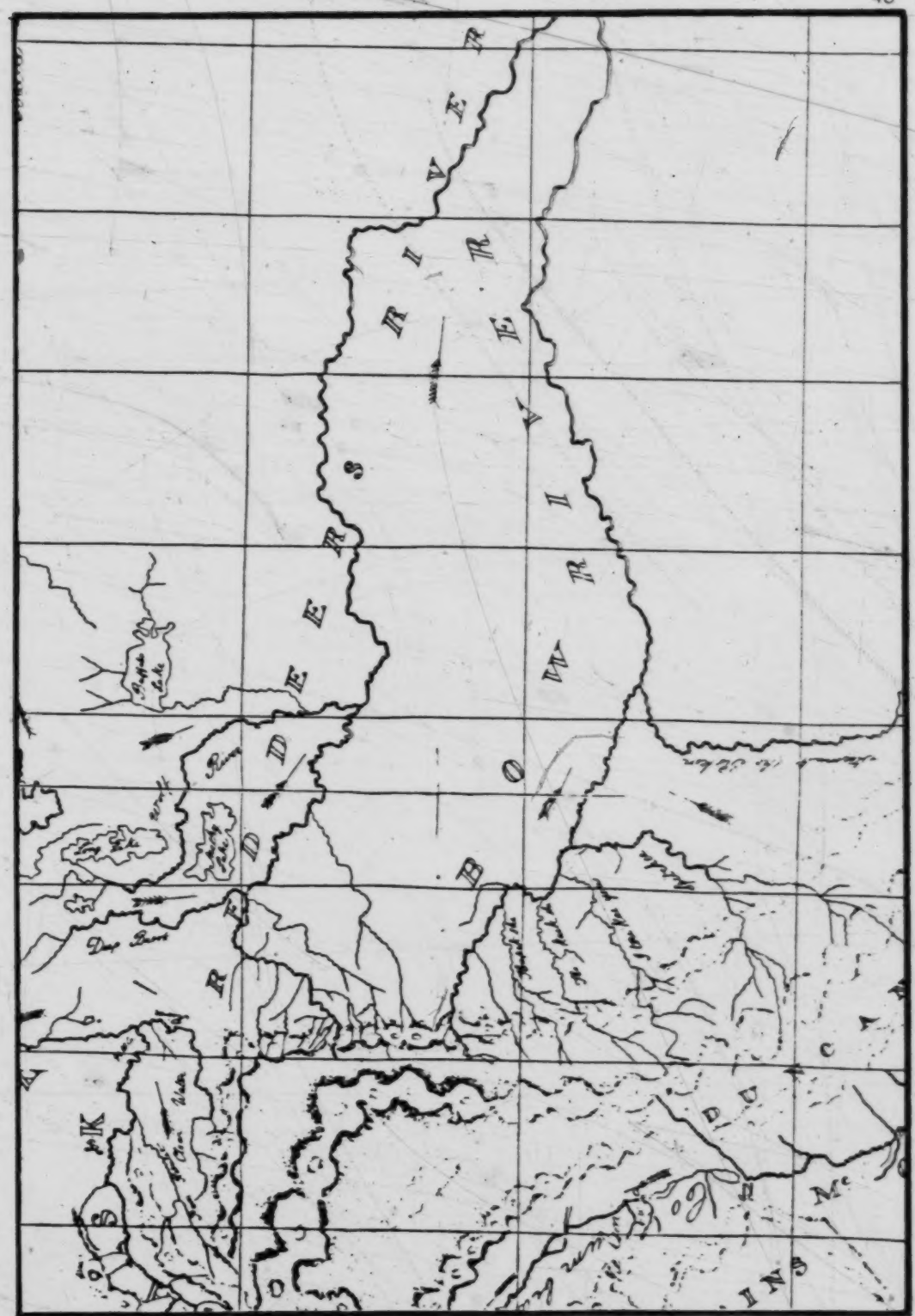
Map 4-4 Sketch map of Red Deer and Bow River areas by Peter Fidler
(Hudson's Bay Company Archives B.39/a/2 fo. 92d)

Belly River/Lower Oldman River (Map 4-2)

49° 57' North 111° 42' West

Modern application of the names Belly River and Oldman River is considerably different from that of one hundred years ago. Prior to a change in application of these names in the 1910s, the Oldman River was considered to be the lesser of the two rivers and was therefore shown on the maps as flowing into the Belly River west of the modern-day City of Lethbridge. The Belly River then continued ~~on~~ to join the Bow River in forming the South Saskatchewan River. Modern application is the reverse of this. The Belly River now flows into the Oldman River and the Oldman joins the Bow to form the South Saskatchewan River.

That portion of the river below the junction of the Oldman and Belly Rivers (i.e. the lower Oldman River) is named on Fidler's "Ak ko moock ki map"[5](Map 4-3) as "Moo koo wan River" while that portion of the river above the junction is shown as "Stimmex e piscon" River. Thompson's "Map..."[6](Map 4-5) uses the single name "Steemuk ske Piskon" for the entire length of the feature. Literal translations[7] of these Blackfoot names show a partial positive correlation between the native names and the modern names. "Moo koo wan" is literally "belly", the name used by the Blackfoot Indians to describe their Indian neighbours to the east who are currently referred to as the Gros Ventre Indians. The Blackfoot words "Stimmix e piscon" or as Thompson transcribed it "Steemuk ske Piskon", is literally "bull buffalo jump". Place Names of Alberta[8] misinterprets these words as meaning "bull-head". There is no creek or river in south-western Alberta identified by this name.




Map 4-5 Portion of David Thompson's 1813-1814 map

Big Hill Creek (Map 4-2)

51° 11' North 114° 29' West

This small stream, which flows past the site of the historic Cochrane Ranche(sic), is shown as "ooms sin ape" on Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[9](Map 4-3). The literal meaning of this Blackfoot name is "picture rock"[10]. It is rumoured there were once Indian pictographs on the sandstone outcroppings along this stream. Verification of this comes from George Dawson's Geological Survey of Canada Report on Progress for 1885. Appendix II of this Report lists the Blackfoot names for a number of features in south-western Alberta and includes the listing: "Picture Rocks (on stream at Big Hill above Calgary) . . . omisinah"[11].

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this stream.

The name Big Hill Creek is descriptive of the creeks position relative to Big Hill, also a descriptive name.

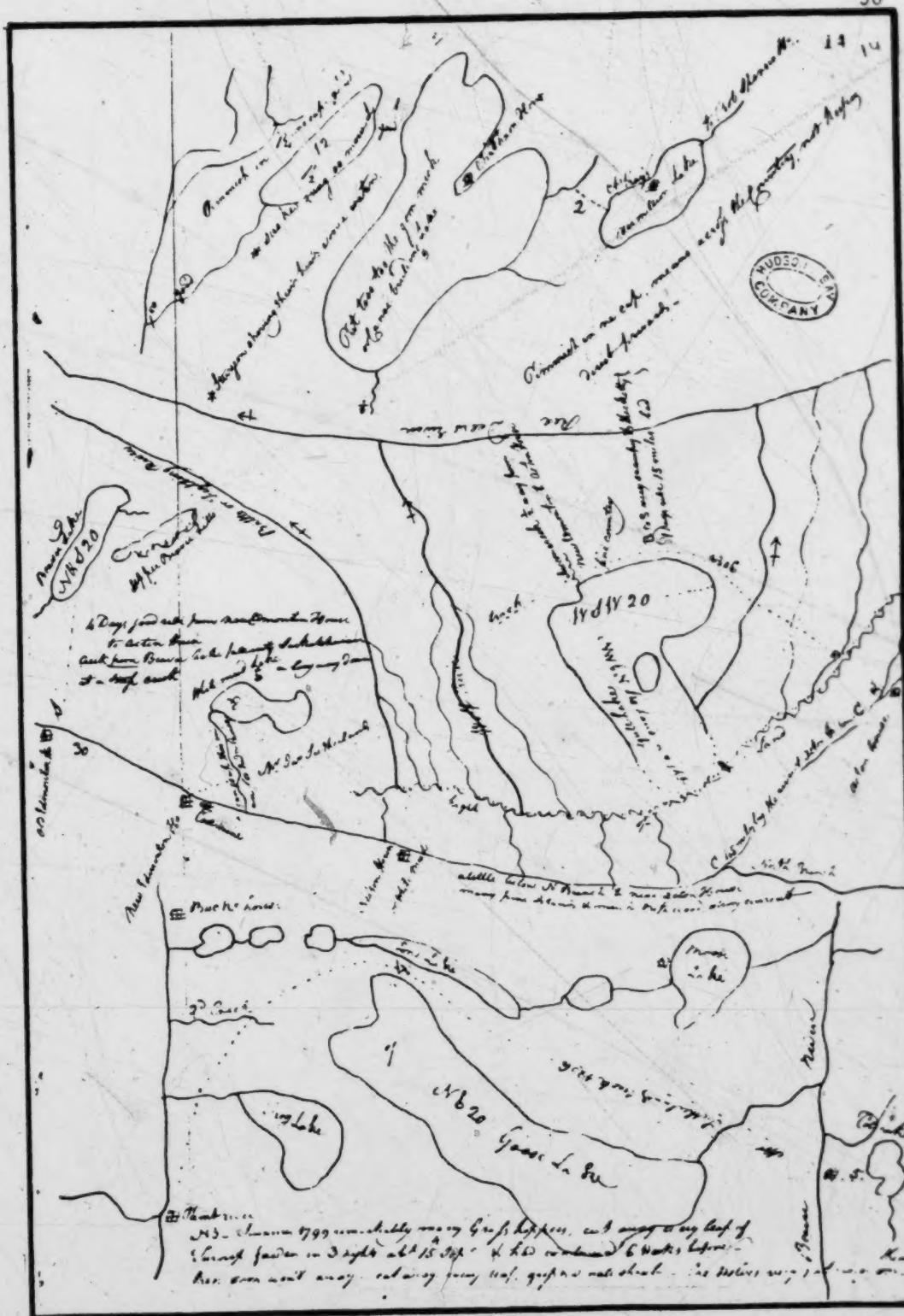
Blindman River (Map 4-2)

52° 22' North 113° 46' West

Both Thompson's "Map..."[12](Map 4-5) and Fidler's "Sketch map..."[13](Map 4-6) refer to this river as "Wolf River". It would appear that this feature was known by this name for at least a short period of time prior to 1800. On September 19, 1799 James Bird, in his Edmonton House Journal for 1799-1800[14] wrote:

> At 7 a.m. we set off, rode till 2 p.m. then camped at the side of a small river called the Wolfes River . . .

Bird was on a cross-country trip, by horse, from Fort Edmonton to Acton House (Rocky Mountain House) along a trail known as the "Wolfe's




Map 4-6 Sketch Map of Lakes and Rivers by Peter Fidler
(Hudson's Bay Company Archives E.3/4 fo. 14)

Track". This trail led south from Edmonton House, swung around the south end of Gull Lake and continued west to Acton House. This trail and the geographical features along it were to become well known among the fur traders of the region. Fisher's Rocky Mountain House Journal for 1828-29[15] describes crossing the "Rivier du Bois Planter"(sic) prior to reaching the "River de la Loge de Medicine", our modern Medicine River, on the "Wolfe's Track" from Edmonton to Rocky Mountain House.

On the same track one year later Fisher[16] records that he crossed the "Rivier du Borgne" prior to reaching the "Medecine River". The French word "borgne" is used to indicate someone who has one blind eye or is only half-blind. Place-Names of Alberta indicates that the name "Blindman" is a translation of the Cree "pas-ka-poo" and that it was "so named by the Crees because a war party hunting in that vicinity became snow blind"[17]. The literal translation given by Anderson[18] for the Cree word "pas-ka-poo" is "he is blind". When translating the Cree name for this feature the French had a word that adequately conveyed the concept of the partial or temporary blindness known as snow-blindness. The closest translation in the English language was "blindman" which at best is an incomplete translation. There is no indication why the name for this feature changed from "Wolfs River" in 1799 to "Rivier du Bois Planter" (Planted Woods River) in 1829 to "Rivier du Borgne" in 1830.

Bow River/South Saskatchewan River (Map 4-2)

50° 55' North 109° 54' West

One of the earliest references to a name for this feature comes from Fidler's Journal of a Journey[19]. On December 19th, 1792 Fidler wrote:

> . . . arrived upon the Banks of the Bad River - by the Southern Indians called As kow seepee - and by the Muddy river Indians Na ma kay sis sa ta or the Bow hills river - these Hills run in a parallel direction with the Rocky Mountain from their Northern termination near the Devils head and there South end terminates at the banks of this river . . .

Turnor's "1794 map"[20] of Western Canada labels this river as the "Naw maw hasis, a tow Ishow or Bad River".

Peter Fidler was aware of at least two native names for this feature and chose to use, on his maps and in his Journals, the translation of the Cree "As kow seepee" meaning "Bad River". This name continued to be used by employees of the Hudson's Bay Company until well into the 1810s. Thomas Heron's Report on District for Chesterfield House[21], which was sent to George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1823, refers to this river as the Bow River. An explanation of the origin of the name "Bad" is given by James Bird in A Short Account of Edmonton District 1815[22] where he states that

> . . . the last mentioned River [Bad River] has acquired its name from the extreme rapidity of its current and its numerous rapids which together with its Southerly course prevents its freezing firmly over in winter, and it is therefore subject to sudden and dangerous breaking of the ice . . .

Further examination of subsequent District Reports for Edmonton indicate that by the early 1820s the name Bow River had been

substituted for "Bad River".

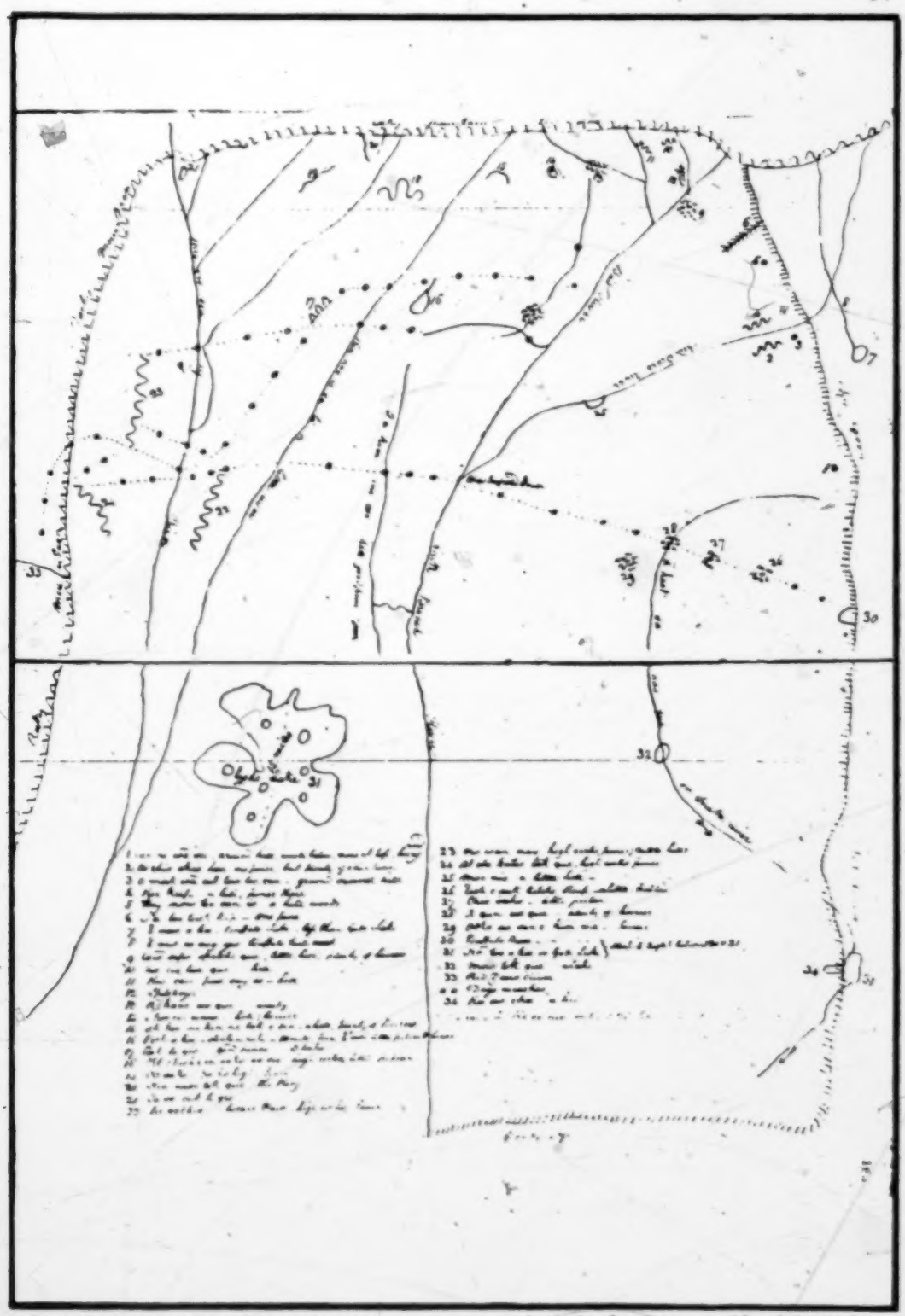
This change of name can probably be attributed to the influence that the employees of the North West Company had on the Hudson's Bay Company after the 1821 amalgamation. Thompson's "Map..."[23](Map 4-5), produced for the North-west Company, labels the river as the "Bow River" which is essentially a shortened form of Peter Fidler's "Bow hills river" noted above.

The name South Saskatchewan River has only been placed on that portion of the river below the junction on the Bow and Oldman Rivers in recent times. It is an extention on the Cree name 'kis-is-ska-tche-wan', meaning 'swift current', from a lower portion of the same river.

Buffalo Lake (Map 4-2)

52° 27' North•112° 54' West

The earliest reference to the name Buffalo Lake comes from Fidler's Journal of a Journey over Land from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountain in 1792 and 3[24]. Fidler simply mentions the name in passing and does not give an exact location for it. The first indication of this lake's location comes from Turnor's "1794 map"[25]. Fidler's "Ki oo cus map"[26](Map 4-7) labels the lake as "E new o kee, Buffalo Lake". The Blackfoot word for Buffalo is "eini"[27]. Dawson's Report[28] indicates that Buffalo Lake is known as "ini'oghkee" while Place-Names of Alberta[29] attributes the name to the translation of the Cree word "mustus" which, according to Anderson[30] is literally "cow". The Cree word for buffalo is



Map 4-7 Indian Map Drawn by Ki oo cus- or the Little Bear a Blackfoot Chief 1802 (Hudson's Bay Company Archives E.3/2 fos. 104d, 105)

"puskwaw-mostos" or literally "prairie-cow".

Thompson's "Map..."[31] clearly labels this lake as Buffalo Lake.

Chief Mountain (Map 4-2)

48° 55' North 113° 37' West

Fidler, on December 31st, 1792, wrote

> . . . went SSW 6 miles and set on high cliff on the Eastern edge of the Rocky Mountain, S43°E, about 25 miles off called by these Indians Nin nase tok que or the King, and by the Southern Indian the Governor of the Mountain being the highest place they know of . . .[32]

The Blackfoot word for Chief is "ninau"[33] which would tend to confirm Dawson's[34] translation of "nina-stokis" as Chief Mountain. Clearly "Chief", "King" and "Governor" are all translations of the same native word for the mountain.

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

Crowsnest River (Map 4-2)

49° 36' North 114° 03' West

Both Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[35](Map 4-3) and his "Sketch map..."[36] indicate that this feature is known by the Blackfoot Indians as "a paypis con". The literal translation of this name is "winter weasel buffalo jump"[37]. Place-Names of Alberta[38], under the listing for Crowsnest, indicates that the name is a translation of the Blackfoot word "ma-sto-eeas". The obvious negative correlation between what the river was called in the early 1800s and the present name, which is apparently a translation of a Blackfoot word, is explained by the footnote under Crowsnest in Place-Names of Alberta:

> The present Crowsnest mountain is in lat. 49° 42', long 114° 35'. The original mountain, however, to bear the name may have been some 18 miles further east according to a statement of Mr. R. N. Wilson, for many years Indian agent on the Blood Indian reserve, who wrote (1918): - 'About 22 years ago the aged Blood Chief, Ermine Horse or Blackfoot - Old-Woman, guided me to the scene of the murder of two white miners, by himself and some companions in his early life. He had stated that it was a[t] crow's nest but, to my surprise, headed for a high, isolated and prominent hill standing between the Porcupines and the Rockies and some few miles north and east of the Eastern entrance to the Crow's Nest Pass. He said this is what the Indians called the Crow's Nest (literally speaking, the raven's home) pointing to the timbered rocky top. I questioned him about the pass and what the whites call the Crow's Nest mountain, to which he replied that perhaps is the white man's talk. We Indians know but one Crow's Nest and this is it, and waving his arm about all Indians refer to this locality as the Crow's Nest country, which would account for the name being extended to the neighbouring river and pass.[39]

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

Cypress Hills (Map 4-2)

49° 34' North 110° 08' West

This feature is first referred to by its Blackfoot name in 1801-2 when Fidler wrote:

> December 4, [1801] Friday. Sent four men to get pitch about eighty miles off at the I ah kim me coo hill, no pines nearer this place. Sent a Blackfoot along with them as guide.[40]

The spelling of this Blackfoot name varies considerably between different sources. In 1885 Dawson[41] indicated that the Blackfoot word for the Cypress Hills is "ai-ekue-ekwe" but does not offer a translation for the name. Uhlenbeck and Van Gulik[42] spell it "aiikimmiko" and explain that this literally means "striped earth" which would be descriptive of the highly visible stratigraphy of the Hills.

Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[43](Map 4-3) gives the spelling as "I e kin mee coo" while his "Ki oo cus map"[44](Map 4-7) shows it as "I am kim mee coo - hill good pine and fur". Heron's District Report[45] makes passing reference to the Cypress Hills being called "Fir Mountains".

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

The name Cypress is derived from "le Cypress" of the voyageurs.

Devils Head (Map 4-2)

51° 21' North 115° 16' West

The only mention of this feature in either David Thompson's or Peter Fidler's works comes from Fidler's Journal of a Journey[46] where he writes, under the date November 29, 1792:

> A remarkable High Cliff of the Rocky Mountains called by our People the Devil's Head and by the Muddy river Indians O mock cow wat che mooks as sin or the Swans bill, bears from hear S35°W.

Turnor's "1794 map"[47] shows the name "O mock kow wach e mook ass is Devil's Head" for this feature.

Elbow River (Map 4-2)

51° 03' North 114° 02' West

Thompson's "Map..."[48](Map 4-5) labels this feature as "Ho kaik shi". No explanation for this obviously native name could be found in his Narrative[49] nor in any of his Journals. Translation of these words was not possible as they are either no longer part of the Blackfoot language or were so poorly transcribed by Thompson from the

Native form as to render them non-translatable.

Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[50](Map 4-3) indicates that the feature was called "ooche nay e pis con" by the Blackfoot. The map in folio 92d of his Fort Chipewyan Post Journal[51] indicates that this Blackfoot name means "willow pond river".

The name Elbow is descriptive of a sharp bend in the river and probably dates from the late 1800s.

Grand Valley Creek (Map 4-2)

51° 13' North 114° 34' West

Fidler's "Ak ki mock map""[52] refers to this feature as "na ti oo pox". The literal translation of this Blackfoot name is "wild cat creek".[53] This stream is immediately east of a feature presently referred to as "Wild Cat Hills". Dawson gives the Blackfoot name for the Wild Cat Hills as "natayo-paghsin"[54]. The Blackfoot word for bob-cat is "nataio".[55]

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

The names Grand Valley and Grand Valley Creek date to ca.1900 and are descriptive.

Gull Lake (Map 4-2)

52° 34' North 114° 00' West

Thompson's "Map..."[56](Map 4-5) gives the name "Long Lake" for this feature while a liberal interpretation of Fidler's "Sketch map..."[57] indicates the name "Gull Lake" for this feature. There is only a tentative positive correlation between Fidler's "Gull Lake" and

the modern Gull Lake. On Fidler's map the shape of the lake is close to that of the present shape but its position relative to "Wolf River" (Blindman River) is wrong. Neither Thompson's nor Fidler's Journals offer an explanation of the names "Long" or "Gull".

Highwood River (Map 4-2)

50° 49' North 13° 47' West

The first mention of a name for this feature comes from Fidler's Journal of a Journey...[58]. On December 14, 1792 he wrote ". . . arrived at the Spitcheyee river . . . ."[59]. Thompson's "Map..."[60](Map 4-5) indicates that this feature is called "Spitchee". Both Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[61] and his "Sketch map of the Red Deer and Bow River areas..."[62](Map 4-4) show the name "Spitcheyee" for this feature.

The literal translation of the Blackfoot word "Spitchee" or "Spitcheyee" is "highwoods"[63]. Place Names of Alberta explains that Highwood is a

> translation of Indian name, spitcee, which so called because the river is on nearly the same level as the prairie instead of in a 'bottom'; as a result, the belt of timber along the stream is much 'higher' than usual, and is visible at a considerable distance.[64]

Turnor's "1794 map"[65] gives the pronunciation of this name as "Spitchiwee" while Dawson[66] shows it as "spitzii".

Jumpingpound Creek (Map 4-2)

51° 11' North 114° 30' West

Once again we have a situation where the native name given by

Thompson on his "Map..."[67](Map 4-5), "Hapik shi", is not translatable (see discussion for Elbow River). Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[68](Map 4-3) gives the name of this creek as "E tuck ga ase" which literally means "bushes around it".[69]

Place-Names of Alberta[70] indicates that Jumpingpound Creek is "ninapiskan" in Blackfoot which literally means "men's pound".

Little Bow River (Map 4-2)

49° 53' North 112° 29' West

Both Fidler's "Ak ko mock map"[71](Map 4-3) and his "Sketch map"[72](Map 4-4) indicate that the name of this feature is "nam ma ta" which in the Blackfoot language means "bow or weapon"[73]. Place-Names of Alberta[74] gives the origin of the name Little Bow River as ". . . na-muhtai . . . name in Blackfoot for 'bow'". Dawson's[75] interpretation of the name Little Bow River of "namagh-ty" was that it meant "naked river". The Blackfoot word for 'bow' given by Uhlenbeck and Van Gulik[76] is "namaii".

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

Medicine River (Map 4-2)

52° 04' North 114° 06' West

The only mention of a name for this river, at least prior to the 1820s, comes from Thompson's "Map..."[77](Map 4-5) where he labels it as "Deep Brook". It is possible that Thompson was simply describing the river as a 'deep brook' and was not in fact indicating the name of the river. Peter Fidler does not give a name for this river.

The first mention of the name "Medicine" for this river comes from Fisher's Rocky Mountain House Journal[78] for the fall of 1828. While on route from Edmonton to Rocky Mountain House along the "Wolfe's Track" he crossed the "Rivier de la Loge de Medicine" while the next year, 1829, he refers to the river as the "medecine River"[79].

Mokowan Ridge (Map 4-2)

49° 30' North 113° 13' West

Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[80](Map 4-3) gives the name "moo coo wan's hills" for this feature. A literal translation of the Blackfoot word "moo coo wan" is "belly"[81]. Fidler was referring to a feature that is at present locally known as the "Belly Buttes" while officially called Mokowan Ridge. Dawson refers to Belly Butte as "mo-ko-an-etomo"[82].

David Thompson does not give a name for this feature.

Nose Hill (Map 4-2)

51° 07' North 114° 08' West

Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[83](Map 4-3) gives the name "mooks as sis" as the name for this feature. The literal translation of this Blackfoot word is "nose"[84]. Dawson lists:

> The Nose (above Calgary, on oppositie side of river . . . mok-sis-sis[85].

Uhlenbeck and Van Gulils[86] give the Blackfoot word for "nose" as "moyksissis".

David Thompson does not give a name for this feature.

Oldman River (upper) (Map 4-2)

49° 36' North 113° 59' West

Fidler refers to this feature both as "Na pee ooch e tay cots"[87] and "Na pee oo che eta cots"[88]. There are several unrelated interpretations[89] of this Blackfoot name that are possible in light of Fidler's phonetic rendering. One involves the spiritual being known as "na pi" or "old man" while the other involves "napiayke"[90] or whiskey. The Blackfoot name could conceivably mean "where we were given whiskey" but in light of present day usage is probably a reference to "napi". Fidler, on December 31, 1792, noted

> . . . a place [Old Man's Bowling Green] here called Naw hen ooch eat cots from whence this river Derives its name . . .[91]

Dawson indicates that Old Man River in Blackfoot is "napia-otzi-kagh-tzipi" or "natok-kiokas"[92].

David Thompson does not give a name for this feature.

Pakowki Lake (Map 4-2)

49° 20' North 110° 55' West

Fidler's "Ki oo cus map"[93](Map 4-7) shows the Blackfoot name "Pock a kee-stinking lake" for this feature. Place-Names of Alberta indicates that the name Pakowki is "Blackfoot for 'bad water' lake"[94]. Uhlenbeck and Van Gulik lists the Blackfoot for "bad-water" as "paykayke"[95].

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

Pincher Creek/Middle Oldman River (Map 4-2)

49° 47' North 113° 03' West

Both Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[96](Map 4-3) and his "Sketch map of the Red Deer and Bow River areas..."[97](Map 4-4) indicate that this creek in the Blackfoot language is called "Sa kim owp pe ne pee". No literal translation of this name could be determined.

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

The name Pincher(sic) dates to approximately 1880 when a man lost a pair of horseshoe pincers in the creek.

Red Deer River (Map 4-2)

50° 55' North 109° 54' West

The earliest reference to the name Red Deer River, from either Thompson's or Fidler's materials, is from Fidler's Journal of a Journey[98] where he mentions crossing the "Red Deer River" on November 14, 1792. The name appears frequently on Fidler's maps and in his various Journals from this date.

Thompson's "Map..."[99](Map 4-5) also shows the name "Red Deers River" while his Narrative[100] also mentions the name on several occasions. In Thompson's recording of "Saukamappee's account of former times"[101] the name "Stag River" is mentioned and the footnote, by J. B. Tyrrell, suggests that this is the Red Deer River.

Place-Names of Alberta[102] indicates that Red Deer is a translation of the Cree "was-ka-sioo" while Dr. Anderson[103] indicated that the name should be "wa-was-ke-siw" which is Cree for elk.

Rocky Mountains (Map 4-2)

52° North 118° West

According to Professor A. W. Read[103] of Columbia University, the Spaniards applied the first name to the Rocky Mountains at some time prior to 1556 by calling them the ("Sierra Nevadas"[105]. The French explorer and fur trader La Verendrye, though it is doubtful he saw the Rocky Mountains, obtained a map by an Indian name 'Ochagach' that showed a range of western hills or mountains as the "Montagnes de Pierres brilliantes" or literally "mountains of bright stones". This name was later modified to "Shining Mountains", a name used by Peter Pond on his "1787 map"[106]

Another name that appears to have been used concurrently with the above is "Montagnes des Roches" as used by the French after the time of La Verandrye. Read[107] suggests that the name "Montagnes des Roches" was a name commonly used by the French voyageurs and that the present form of "Rocky" is a direct translation of this. This interpretation of the origin of the name does not account for the use by the British of the Hudson's Bay Company of the name "Stony Mountains".

The first recorded use of the name "Stony" comes from Samuel Hearne, who, on July 4, 1771 wrote:

> We nevertheless walked twenty-seven miles to the North-West, fourteen of which were on what the Indians call the Stony Mountains . . .[108]

From this statement by Hearne it is obvious that the British use of

'stony' and the French use of 'roches' are both direct translations from the native language.

Our present use of 'Rocky' as opposed to 'Stony' can probably be attributed to semantics. Read[109] stated:

> . . . one of the curious differences between British English and American English is that in England a rock is a large mass that cannot be thrown, while in America even small boys can throw a rock . . .

Read goes on to explain that American preference would therefore be towards the use of the name "Rocky" instead of "Stony".

Although David Thompson does not use the name Rocky Mountains on his "Map..."[110] he does make frequent mention of this name in his Narrative and in his original notes. On the other hand Peter Fidler appears to have used "Stony", "Stoney" and "Rocky" interchangeably. In his Journal of a Journey...[111] Fidler alternates the page heading "From Buckingham House towards the Stony Mountains" with "From Buckingham House towards the Rocky Mountains". In this Journal on November 26, 1792 Fidler makes mention of sighting the "Rocky Mountains" while on December 10, 1792 Fidler wrote ". . . this river apparently runs East and West nearly and falls out of the Stoney Mountains . . .".

Place-Names of Alberta[112] indicates that in Cree the Rocky Mountains are called "as-sin-wati" while in Blackfoot their "mis-tokis". Uhlenbeck and Van Gulik[113] interpret the Blackfoot word "mistaksko" as "rocky hill" while Anderson[114] interprets the Cree word "asine-wuche" as "rock hills".

Sheep River (Map 4-2)

50° 44' North 113° 51' West

Fidler's "Ak ko mock ki map"[115](Map 4-3) shows this creek is called "Stommix e piscon" by the Blackfoot Indians while his "Sketch map"[116](Map 4-4) shows the name "Bull pond River" for this stream. The literal meaning of "Stommix e piscon" is "buffalo bull buffalo jump"[117] which is the approximate meaning that Fidler gives the Blackfoot name. In Fidler's Journal of a Journey...[118] the entry for December 25, 1792 states:

> . . . put up at the Bull Pound river or Stommix e pis con, about 8 or 10 yards wide, midling water, runs a SE course about 10 miles, where it falls into the Spitcheyee River . . .

This Journal, on December 13, 1792, mentioned a river called "Ee too kiys" which from its location description is probably a tributary of "Bull Pound River". This is likely the same Blackfoot name, "i tou kai you", used by Thompson on his "Map..."[119](Map 4-5) to designate Sheep River. The spelling of these names is different but the pronunciation would be similar. No literal translation of these names could be determined although Place-Names of Alberta[120] does indicate that the Sheep River is "Itukaiup or Sheep on Arrowsmiths map, 1859". It is possible that "Itukaiup", "Ee too ki up" and "I tou kai you" are all the same Blackfoot word for sheep, a word that is no longer in use. The modern Blackfoot word for sheep is "imaykixkina".[121]

Sylvan Lake (Map 4-2)

52° 21' North 114° 10' West

Thompson's "Map..."[122](Map 4-5) shows the name "Methy Lake" for

this feature. Place-Names of Alberta confirms this interpretation of Thompson's map by stating:

> Sylvan; lake . . . Methy lake on Thompson map, 1814; Swan Lake of Palliser map, 1859 . . .

According to Anderson[123] the word "methy" is probably the Cree word "meyey" meaning "ling fish".[124]

Peter Fidler does not indicate a name for this feature.

The name Sylvan refers to the lake being surrounded by trees and dates to the early 1900s.

Tail Creek (Map 4-2)

52° 18' North 113° 04' West

Fidler's "Ki oo cus map"[125](Map 4-7) indicates that this is called "E new oo suy yis Buffalo Tail Creek". The Blackfoot word for Buffalo is "eini".[126]

Thompson's "Map..."[127](Map 4-5) does not indicate a name for this feature though it does show the name Buffalo Lake for the lake drained by this creek.

Willow Creek (Map 4-2)

49° 46' North 113° 22' West

Both Fidler's "Ak ki mock ki map"[128](Map 4-3) and his "Sketch map..."[129](Map 4-4) indicate that the Blackfoot name for this feature is "Stow e piscon". The literial translation of this name given by Dempsey[130] is "winter buffalo jump" while Place-Names of Alberta[131] indicates that Willow Creek in Blackfoot is "stiapiskan"

meaning "ghost pound".

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

The name Willow is descriptive of the local flora.

## Northern Area

### Athabasca Lake (Map 4-8,4-9)

59° 05' North 110° 00' West

As with any geographical feature covering a large area Athabasca Lake has had a variety of different names applied to it. Fidler's Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806[132] indicates that this lake is called by the Southern Indians (Cree) "Too-toos Sack-a-ha-gan" or "Thew Too-ak" or "the Paps Lake" by the Chipewyan Indians. The literal translation of the Cree "Too-toos Sack-a-ha-gan" is "teat lake".[133] Fidler, in the same Journal, also indicates that the lake is called in Cree "Athapiscow" or "Kyte-hel-le-ca" in the Chipewyan language. This double naming by the local natives is explained by Philip Turnor in his Lake Athabasca Post Journal 1790-92[134] by the following entry made July 3, 1791:

> . . . and came to the main shore on NW side which is an intire [sic] rock and many rocky Island laying to the South from which this part of the Lake is called the Lake of the papes from their appearing high and rounded at a distance and no land seen beyond them in the Southern Indian tongue Too-Toos Sack-a-ha-gan in the Chipewyan tongue Thew-too-ak or the Paps Lake . . . low swampy ground on the South side with a few willows growing upon it, from which the Lake in general takes its name Athapiscon in the Southern tongue signifies open country such as lakes with willows and grass growing about them or swampy land without woods Kyte-hel-le-ca in the

> Chipewyan tongue implies the same meaning but that name does not properly belong, or is applied to any part but the South end . . .

Thompson's "Map..."[135](Map 4-9) indicates the name "Athabasca Lake" and frequent mention of this name is made in his Narrative[136] especially in Chapter 8 entitled "Trip to Lake Athabasca".

Peter Pond, on his "1785 map"[137], shows the name "Araubaska Lake" while his "1787 map"[138] shows the name "Lake of the Hills". Alexander Mackenzie's "1793 map"[139] indicates that the lake is called "Lake of the Hills" and places the name "Athabasca" on a smaller lake to the south-west, probably our modern Mamawi Lake.

Both the name "Athabasca" and the name "Lake of the Hills" appear to have persisted in local use until at least the 1820s. William Brown's Report of Athabasca Lake District 1820-21[140] states that

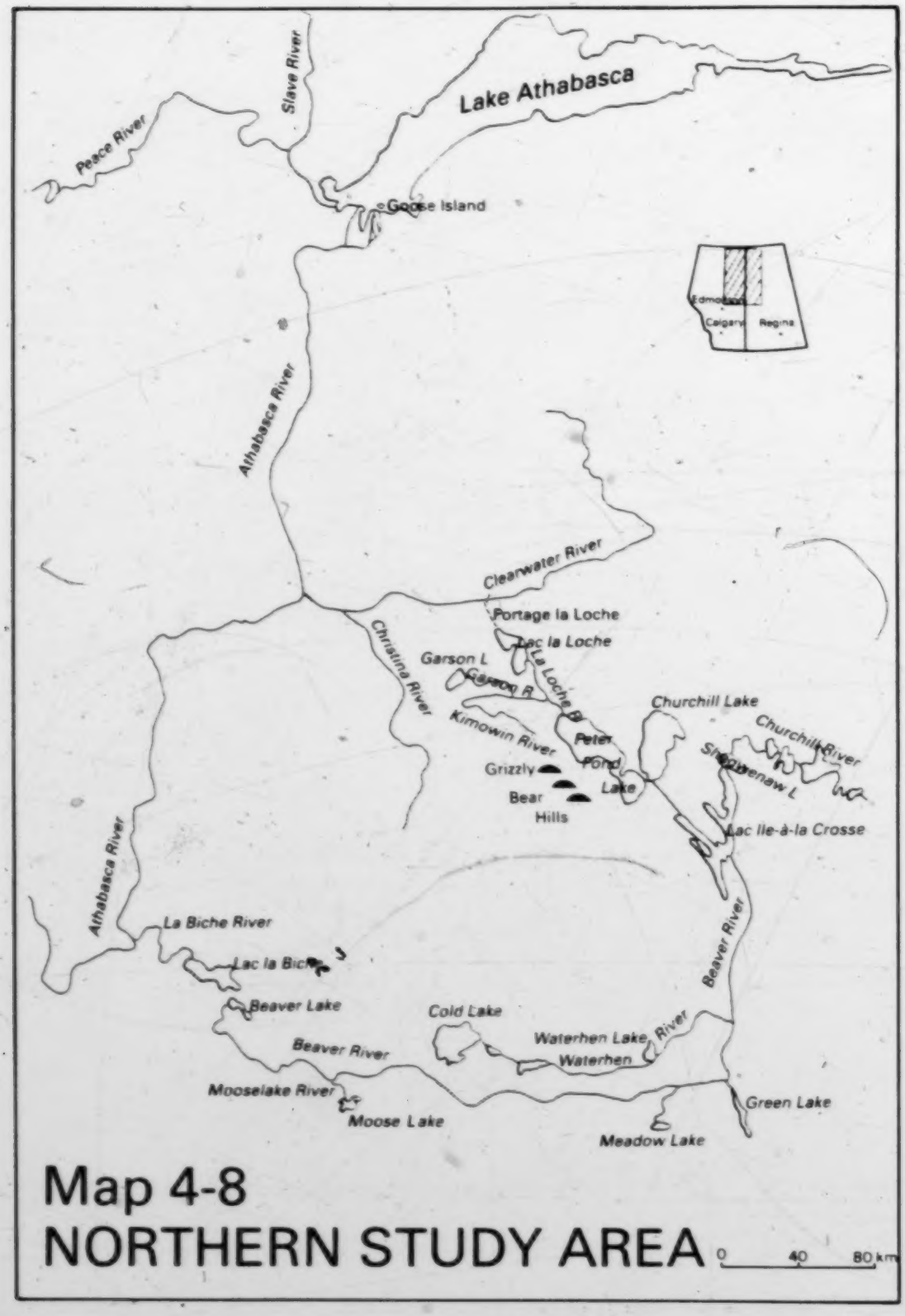
> the Athabasca or Lake of the Hills runs nearly East and West and is about 250 miles in length and in general from 20 to 30 miles wide . . .

Athabasca River (Map 4-8)

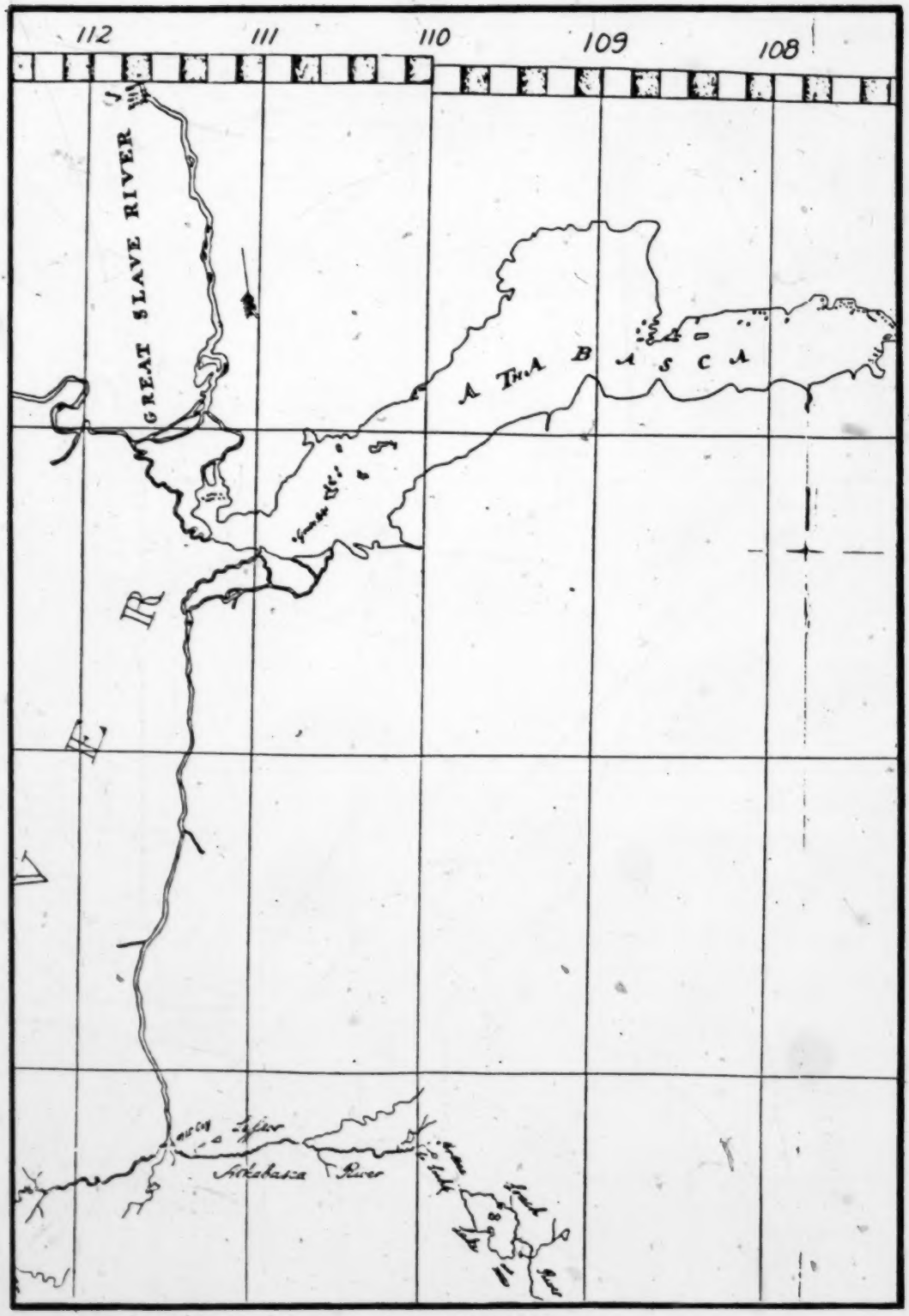
58° 40' North 110° 50' West

As with Athabasca Lake the river of the same name appears to have been well known in the past by at least two names. Both Thompson[141] and Fidler[142] use the name "Athabasca River" even though many of their contemporaries used the name "Elk River" for this feature. Alexander Mackenzie uses this name on his "1793 map"[143] while James Keith, in his Fort Chipewyan Report on District 1823-24,[144] stated "thence in a westerly direction intersecting Elk River (as designated by Sir. A. McK) . . .".

There were also a number of variations in the spelling of "Athabasca". Pond's "1787 map"[145] indicates that this river is




# Map 4-8
# NORTHERN STUDY AREA




Map 4-9 Portion of David Thompson's 1813-1814 map

called "Gt. Rr. Araubascka", while Turnor's "1794 map"[146] shows it as "Athapiscon R." and his "1778-9 map"[147] shows it as "Athapescow River".

Beaver River (Map 4-8)

55° 26' North 107° 45' West

Thompson and Fidler both make frequent mention of "Beaver River" in their Journals and on their maps. One of the earliest indications that this particular river was so called comes from Turnor's "1778-9 map"[148].

Robert Kennedy wrote in his Lesser Slave Lake Report on District 1819-20[149] that

> Beaver River empties into Isle a la Crosse Lake the River receives its name from the numbers of beaver be [sic] found in it by the early adventurers.

Christina River (Map 4-8)

56° 40' North 111° 03' West

Fidler, in his Journal of Exploration and Survey[150] makes reference to this river called by the Southern Indian (Cree) as "Mith-quap-pim a Seepe" or "Ky-goz-zae Dez-za" or the red willow River" by the Chipewyan Indians. Both Turnor's "1778-9 map"[151] and his "1795 map"[152] show this river as "Red Willow R.".

Anderson's[153] translation of the Cree words "Mith-quap-pin a Seepe" is that it should probably be "Mekwa pukwa" which literally means "it is red willow".

The name Christina was placed on this feature in 1911 for the sister of the postmaster at McMurray.

Churchill River (upper) (Map 4-8)

55° 55' North 107° 40' West

This river is referred to on many occasions by both Fidler and Thompson as either the "Missinnippe" or "Churchill River". According to Cameron[154]

> The name Churchill was first applied to the river in 1768 by Capt. John Abraham, a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was sent to establish a post at its mouth. He named it in honour of Lord Churchill, later the Duke of Marlborough, who had been elected governor of the company the previous year.

Anderson's[155] translation of the Cree word "Missinnippe" is "big river" and should be written "misi sepe".

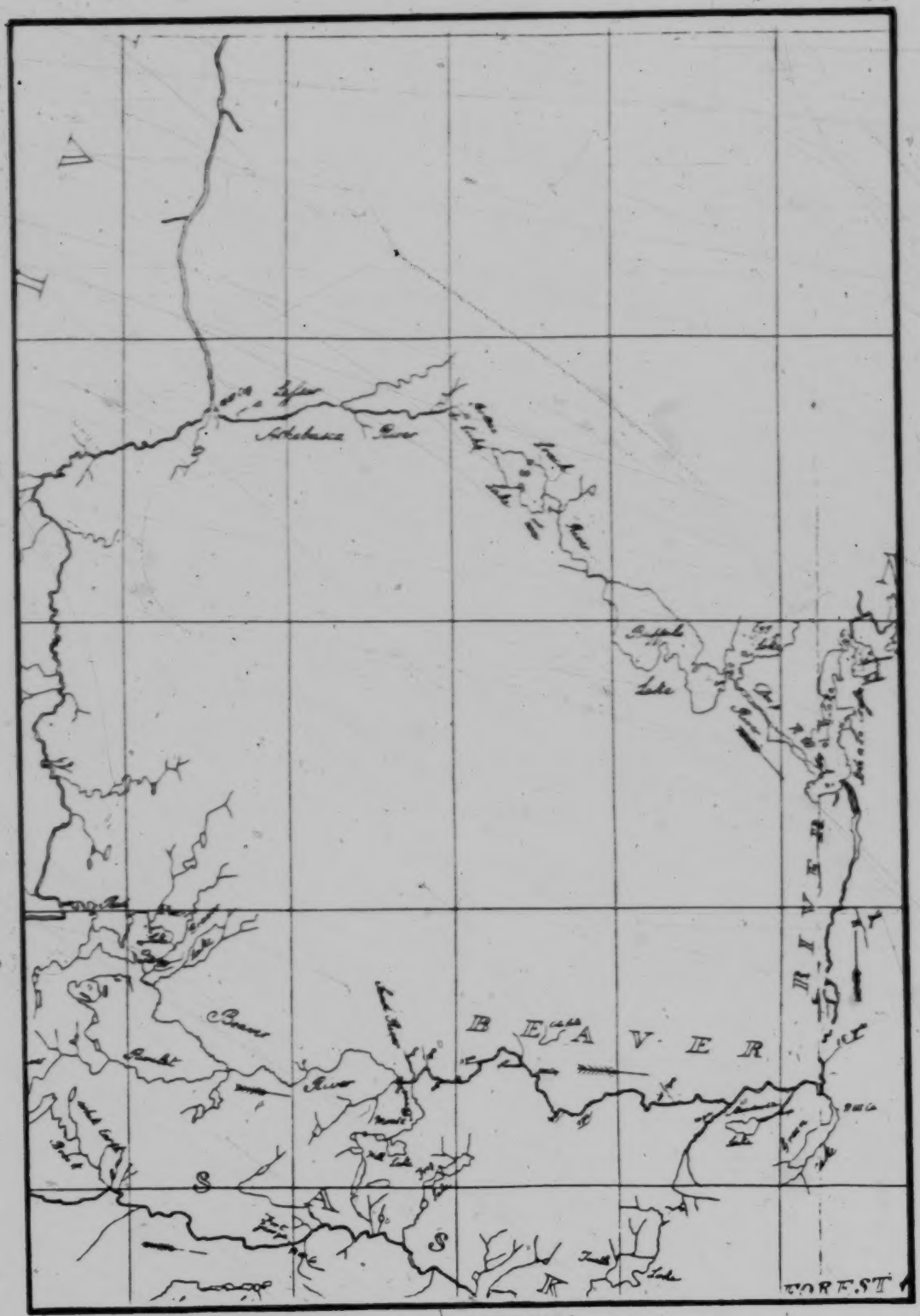
Thompson also uses the name "Deep River" on his "Map..."[156](Map 4-10) for that portion of the Churchill River between Churchill Lake and Isle-a-la-Crosse. The name "English River" was also a well established name for the main body of the Churchill River yet there is no direct evidence that the extreme upper portion of the river was commonly referred to by this name.

Churchill Lake (Map 4-8)

55° 55' North 108° 20' West

Fidler's Journal of Exploration and Survey[157] refers to this lake both as "Clearwater Lake" and by its native names "Wash-a-cum-now Sack-a-ha-gan or Clear water Lake" (Southern Indian) or "Eg-ga-zah Too-ah Too-ah or Egg Lake" by the Chipewyan.

Thompson's "Map..."[158](Map 4-10) indicates that this lake is called "Egg Lake" while Pond, on his "1785 map"[159], refers to this as "Clear Lake" and his "1787 map"[160] shows it as "Lake Clair". The




Map 4-10 Portion of David Thompson's 1813-1814 map

literal translation of the Cree word "wash-a-cum-now" is "clear water", which should be written "wase kum aw".[161]

Clearwater River (Map 4-8)

56° 44' North 111° 23' West

Fidler, in his Journal...[162] refers to this river as the "Clearwater River" while Thompson's "Map..."[163](Map 4-10) shows it as the "Lesser Athabasca River". Turnor's "1778-9 map"[164] labels this river as "wash-a-cum-now or Clearwater R." while Pond's "1787 map"[165] shows it as the "Pelican R.". The name "Pelican" appears to have been used only by Pond although Fidler was aware of the name when he stated ". . . the Pillicon River so called by P. Pond but by the Indian Clearwater River . . ."[166]

Use of the name "Little" or "Lesser" Athabasca appears to have persisted until at least 1820. Brown's Report of Athabasca Lake District 1820-21[167] states

> . . . On reaching the summit [of Portage La Loche] there is a descent of upwards of 800 feet to reach the Little Athabasca River . . .

Cold Lake (Map 4-8)

54° 33' North 110° 05' West

Thompson and Fidler both use the name "Cold Lake" in their Journals and on their maps. Turnor's "1778-9 map"[168] shows the lake as "Cold Water Lake". There was no evidence that this name was derived from the native language.

Garson Lake (Map 4-8)

56° 19' North 110° 02' West

Fidler's Journal...[169] refers to this lake as "Swan Lake". It also appears this way on Turnor's "1778-9 map"[170] and on his "1794 map"[171]. The 1778-9 map carries the title "Chart of Lakes and Rivers in North America by Philip Turnor those shaded are from Actual Survey the others from Canadian and Indian Information". This lake was not shaded on the original map and as Peter Fidler, Philip Turnor and Malcolm Ross claim, in 1790, to have been the first Europeans to visit this lake it is assumed that, in the absence of direct evidence to the contrary, the name "Swan" is a translation of the Native name for the lake. David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

The name Garson was placed on the feature in 1911 and is for the Manager of the H.B.Co. post at Onion Lake, Saskatchewan.

Goose Island (Map 4-8)

58° 39' North 110° 54' West

Fidler's Journal...[172] and Thompson's "Map..."[173](Map 4-9) show the name "Goose Island" for this feature. Mackenzie's "1793 map"[174] also shows "Goose Island" while Turnor's "1794 map"[175] shows "Egg or Goose Island". The only evidence that this name may be a translation of a native name comes from Malcolm Ross' Lake Athabasca Post Journal 1790-1792[176] where, on July 2, 1791, he wrote ". . . we embarked at 8 1/2 PM paddled and arrived at the Goose Island (or hah noo) about midnight . . .". No translation of the obviously native

word "hah noo" could be obtained.

Green Lake (Map 4-8)

54° 10' North 107° 43' West

Both Thompson's "Map..."[177] (Map 4-10) and Fidler's "Old Pumbles map"[178] indicate the name "Green Lake" for this feature. There is no indication in any of the research material that "Green" is a translation of a Native word.

Grizzly Bear Hills (Map 4-8)

56° 00' North 109° 20' West

Fidler's June 1, 1791 entry in his Journal...[179] indicates that these hills are called "Mis-ta-hay Mus-qua Wa-chu" by the "Southern" or Cree Indians "Hot-Lale-zaz-za Seth or the Grizzle Bear Hill" by the Chipewyan Indians. The literal meaning of the Cree "Mis-ta-hay Mus-qua Wa-chu" is "big bear hill".[180] Turnor's "1794 map"[181] shows the name "Grizel Bear Hill" for this feature. David Thompson does not indicate a name for this feature.

Kimowin/Garson Rivers (Map 4-8)

56° 13' North 110° 00' West

Fidler's June 3, 1791 entry in his Journal...[182] indicates that this river is called by the Cree Indians "Wa-pe-sue a Seepe" and by the Chipewyan Indians "Caw-coos a Dez-za or the Swan River". The literal meaning the of the Cree "Wa-pe-sue a Seepe" is "swan river".[183]

David Thompson does not indicate a name for this river.

No explanation for the name Kimowin could be found.

Lac la Biche (Map 4-8)

54° 50' North 112° 03' West

La Biche River (Map 4-8)

55° 01' North 112° 44' West

For these features Thompson and Fidler use the names "Red Deers Lake" and "Red Deers River" or "Brook". The earliest record of the name Red Deer Lake comes from Turnor's "Chart of Lakes and Rivers in North America"[184] dated 1778-9. Mackenzie's "1793 map"[185] also shows the name "Red Deer Lake".

Thompson's Journals[186] for the date of October 4, 1798, mentions "Red Deers Lake" and "Red Deer Brook". In the same Journal, under the date December 2, 1798, he refers to the lake as "Lac la Biche".

Fidler's Lac La Biche Post Journal 1799-1800[187] mentions only the names "Red Deers River" and "Red Deers Lake". These names are prevalent in fur trade documents through to the 1820s. Robert Kennedy's Lac La Biche Post Journal 1819-20[188] makes frequent mention of these features as "river La Bish" and "Lac la bish".

La Biche is a French term meaning 'the deer'.

Lac Isle a la Crosse (Map 4-8)

55° 40' North 107° 45' West

Thompson and Fidler both make frequent mention of the "Lac Isle a la Crosse" in their Journals and on their maps. Cameron relates the

following story concerning the origin of the name:

> Sir Alexander Mackenzie writing in 1801 of his travels through the fur country, describes the location of Fort Ile a la Crosse and adds: "This lake and fort take their names from the island just mentioned which . . . received its denomination from the game of the cross [la crosse] which forms a principal amusement among the natives.[189]

Pond's "1787 map"[190] shows this lake as "Cross L." while Turnor's "1794 map"[191] shows it as "Isle a le Cross or Min nis-tik a Pock a hatwan Sack-a-hagan".

Lac la Loche (Map 4-8)

56° 28' North 109° 30' West

La Loche River (Map 4-8)

56° 09' North 109° 08' West

Portage La Loche (Map 4-8)

Thompson's "Map..."[192](Map 4-10) shows for the lake "Loach Lake", for the river "Loach River" and for the portage "Portage La Loche" while Fidler's Journal...[193], under the date June 1, 1791, indicates that the river is called by the Southern or Cree Indians "Methy-a-Seepe or the Methy River" or "Theent-hel-le Dez-za" by the Chipewyan Indians. His Lac La Biche Post Journal 1799-1800[194] calls the portage "Methy Portage". The literal meaning of the Cree "Methy-a-Seepe" is, according to Anderson,[195] probably "ling fish river" and should be written "meyey sepe".

The names "Methy" and "Loche" appear to have been well used during

the fur trade. Pond's "1785 map"[196] shows "Lake la Loch" while Turnor's "1778-9 map"[197] shows "Methy Lake" for the same feature. These names are probably both forms of the Cree name "meyey" as noted above. A "loach" or "loche" is also a type of fish.

Meadow Lake (Map 4-8)

54° 07' North 108° 20' West

Fidler's Journal...[198] refers to this lake as "Barren Ground Lake". Thompson's "Map..."[199](Map 4-10) shows the name "Meadow Lake" for this feature. There is no indication that these names, which might suggest a similar vegetation condition, are translations of a Native name.

Moose Lake (Map 4-8)

54° 15' North 110° 55' West

Mooselake River (Map 4-8)

54° 21' North 111° 05' West

These features are referred to by both Fidler and Thompson as "Moose" although they tend to use different generics. The lake is called "Moose hill Lake" by Fidler[200] while Thompson uses both "Moose Hill Lake"[201] and "Moose Lake"[202] for this feature. The river is referred to as "Moose Lake Creek" by Fidler[203] and as either "Moose Brook"[204] or as "Moose River"[205] by Thompson. Place-Names of Alberta,[206] under Moose Lake, indicates that

> . . . this is lac d'Orignal [lit. Moose Lake] where Angus Shaw built a trading post for the North West Company in 1789; the lake

is reached from the Beaver river up Mooselake river . . .

Malcolm Ross' May 16, 1791 entry in his Lake Athabasca Post Journal[207] indicates that

> . . . Mr. Shaw and 23 Canadians in 5 Canoes arrived from the beaver River, where he had wintered a long way up at a Lake called the Moose Lake . . .)

Peace River (Map 4-8)

59° 00' North 111° 25' West

Fidler's Journal...[208] refers to this river as "Peace River" or as "Beaver Indian River", a translation of the Chipewyan "Chan-hot-e-na Dez-za".

Pond's "1785"[209] and "1787"[210] maps call this river the "River of Peace" while Turnor's "1778-9 map"[211] shows it as "Beaver Indian River, by the Canadians called the Peace River". Mackenzie's "1793 map"[212] labels the river as "Unjigah or Peace R.". Thompson's "Map..."[213] simply labels it as "Peace River".

Place-Names of Alberta, under the listing for Peace River, sums up these variations by indicating that

> . . . The river has always been known to white man by this name [Peace] and is so called by Alex. Henry, Peter Pond, Philip Turnor and Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Turnor's map, 1790, has the inscription 'Beaver Indian River, by the Canadians called Peace River' and describes the land on both sides as 'Beaver Indian country'. In Cree, Beaver Indian river is a misk we moo sip, Unjigah meaning 'large river', is another Beaver Indian name mentioned by Mackenzie . . .[214]

The river was apparently named after Peace Point, a place on the south bank of the river there the Gree and Beaver Indians are said to have made peace.

Peter Pond Lake (Map 4-8)

55° 55' North 108° 44' West

Fidler's Journal...[215] refers to this lake both in the Cree as "Mis-toose Sack-a-ha-gan" and in the Chipewyan language as "A-gid-da Too-ah or Buffalo Lake" and notes on June 6, 1792 that

> . . . it is called the Buffalo Lake by reason of some few of those animals have been killed in its vicinity near the Grizzil Bear hill . . .

The literal translation[216] of the Cree "mis-toose sack-a-ha-gan" would be "cow lake". The Cree word for Buffalo is "puskwaw-mostos" or literally "prairie cow". This may explain why Peter Pond, on his "1785"[217] and "1787"[218] maps refer to this lake as "Beef Lake" while Turnor's "1778-9"[219] and "1794"[220] maps show it as "Buffalo Lake"; both are rough translations of the Cree word "mis-toose"[221]. Thompson's "Map..."[222](Map 4-10) map simply shows it as "Buffalo Lake".

This lake was officially named Peter Pond Lake in the 1920s.

Shagwenaw Lake (Map 4-8)

55° 54' North 107° 41' West

Thompson's "Map..."[223](Map 4-10) refers to this lake as "Showenaw Lake". According to Anderson[224] both the modern form "Shagwenau" and Thompson's "Showenaw" are likely derived from the Cree word "sakawasin" meaning "it is narrow". Peter Fidler does not indicate a name for this feature.

Slave River (Map 4-8)

60° 09' North 111° 49' West

Fidler's Journal...[225] refers to this river both in the Cree language as "Arch-a-thin-nee Seepe" or "Wan-con Seepe" or in the Chipewyan language as "Bess-chow Dez-za". The former means "Slave Indian River"[226] while the latter means "Great Knife River". Thompson's "Map..."[227] (Map 4-9) refers to this river as the "Great Slave River".

Place-Names of Alberta,[228] under the listing for Slave River, indicates that it is named

> . . . after the Ethchareottine Indians, named awokanak or 'slaves' by the Cree from their timid disposition; etcharevttine means 'people dwelling in the shelter'; this name, under the form Iotchynimy, is applied to the river on the Peter Pond map, 1790.

## Interpretation of Data

The following tables (4-1 and 4-2) list the current official name for each of the geographical features examined in both the northern and southern areas. Along with each official name are the various names recorded by David Thompson and Peter Fidler: the first and second columns indicate whether the names listed are from David Thompson or from Peter Fidler respectively, or are from both[229]. If both Thompson and Fidler had used a name or names for the feature then column three indicates whether there is a positive (+) or negative (-) correlation between those names. A positive correlation would indicate relationship between the names while a negative correlation would mean that the names are obviously not related. Column four then indicates the positive (+) or negative (-) correlation that these names have with the modern name, while column five indicates the positive (+) or negative (-) correlation between the names given by Thompson and Fidler and the native language. Column six indicates whether the feature is a water (w) or land (l) feature and column seven tells whether the Thompson or Fidler names are translations (t) of native names, non-translated (n/t) names, or appear in both (b) forms.

Table 4-1 Comparison of Geographical Names-Southern Section

| NAME OF FEATURE | COLUMN NUMBER (see end of tables for an explanation of numbers and symbols) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Beaver Creek | | |
| Steep rocks river | * - + w t | |
| 2. Belly River/lower Oldman River | | |
| Moo koo wan River | * + + w n/t | analysed as two features |
| Stimmex e piscon or | | |
| Steemuk ske Piskon | * * + - + w n/t | |
| 3. Big Hill Creek | | |
| ooms sin ape | * - + w n/t | |
| 4. Blindman River | | |
| Wolf River | * * + - ? w n/t? | may be totally a "European" name. |
| 5. Bow River/South Saskatchewan River | | |
| Bad River or | | |
| Askow seepee or | | |
| Bow Hills River or | | |
| Na ma kay sis sa ta or | | |
| Bow River | * * + + + w b | |
| 6. Buffalo Lake | | |
| E new o kee or | | |
| Buffalo Lake | * * + + + w b | |
| 7. Chief Mountain | | |
| Nin nase tok que or | | |
| The King or | | |
| The Governor of the Mountain | * + + 1 b | |
| 8. Crowsnest River | | |
| a pay pis con | * - + w n/t | |
| 9. Cypress Hills | | |
| I ah kim me coo | * - + 1 n/t | |

Table 4-1 cont'd

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. Devils Head Mountain<br>Devil's Head or<br>O mok cow watche or<br>mooks as sin or<br>Swans Bill | | * | | + | + | l | b | |
| 11. Elbow River<br>Ho kaik shi or<br>ooche nay e pis con | * | * | - | - | + | w | n/t | |
| 12. Grand Valley Creek<br>na ti oo pox | | * | | - | + | w | n/t | |
| 13. Gull Lake<br>Long Lake<br>Gull Lake | * | * | - | + | ? | w | n/t? | |
| 14. Highwood River<br>Spitcheyee or<br>Spitchee | * | * | + | + | + | w | n/t | |
| 15. Jumpingpound Creek<br>Hapik shi or<br>E tuck qa ase | * | * | - | - | + | w | n/t | |
| 16. Little Bow River<br>nam ma ta | | * | | + | + | w | n/t | |
| 17. Medicine River<br>Deep Brook | * | | | - | | w | n/t? | is Thompson simply describing the feature? |
| 18. Mokowan Ridge<br>Moo coo wan's | | * | | + | + | l | n/t | |
| 19. Nose Hill<br>mooks as sis | | * | | + | + | l | n/t | |
| 20. Oldman River<br>Na pee ooch e tay cots<br>or<br>Na pee oo che eta cots | | * | | + | + | w | n/t | |
| 21. Pakowki Lake<br>Pock a kee or Stinking<br>Lake | | * | | + | + | w | b | |
| 22. Pincher Creek and<br>Oldman River<br>Sa kim owp pe ne pee | | * | | - | + | w | n/t | |

Table 4-1 cont'd

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. Red Deer River<br>Red Deers River | * | * | + | + | + | w | t | for an explanation of the + in column 5 see Place-Names quote in text. |
| 24. Rocky Mountains<br>Rocky<br>Stoney<br>Stony | * | * | + | + | + | l | t | |
| 25. Sheep River<br>Stommix e piscon or<br>Bullpond river or<br>Ee too ki up or<br>I tou kai you | * | * | + | - | + | w | b | see text |
| 26. Sylvan Lake<br>Methy Lake | * | | | - | + | w | n/t | |
| 27. Tail Creek<br>E new oo suy yis-<br>Buffalo Tail Creek | | * | | + | + | w | b | |
| 28. Willow Creek<br>Stow e piscon | | * | | - | + | w | n/t | |

Table 4-2 Comparison of Geographical Names-Northern Section

| NAME OF FEATURE | COLUMN NUMBER 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Athabasca Lake<br>Too-toos Sack-a-ha-gan<br>Thew Too-ak or Pap<br>Lake or<br>Athapiscow or<br>Kyte-hel-le-ca or<br>Athabasca Lake | * | * | + | + | + | w | b | |
| 2. Athabasca River<br>Athabasca River or<br>Elk River | * | * | + | + | + | w | n/t | |
| 3. Beaver River<br>Beaver River | * | * | + | + | | w | n/t? | |

Table 4-2 cont'd

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Christina River<br>Mith-quap-pim a Seepe or<br>Ky-gaz-zae Dez-za or<br>red willow River | | * | | - | + | w | b | |
| 5. Churchill River<br>Missinnippe or<br>Churchill River or<br>Deep River | * | * | + | + | + | w | n/t | Churchill is British while Missinnippe is Cree |
| 6. Churchill Lake<br>Clearwater lake or<br>Wash-a-cum-now<br>Sack-a-ha-gan or<br>Eg-ga-zah Too-ah Too-ah<br>or Egg Lake | * | * | + | - | + | w | b | |
| 7. Clearwater River<br>Clearwater river or<br>Lesser Athabasca River<br>or Wash-a-cum-now | * | * | - | + | + | w | b | |
| 8. Cold Lake<br>Cold Lake or<br>Cold Water Lake | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? | |
| 9. Garson Lake<br>Swan Lake | | * | | - | + | w | t | |
| 10. Goose Island<br>Goose Island | * | * | + | + | + | l | t | translation is from Ross's diary |
| 11. Green Lake<br>Green Lake | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? | |
| 12. Grizzly Bear Hills<br>Mis-ta-hay Mus-qua<br>Wa-chu or<br>Hot-lale-zaz-za Seth<br>(Grizzle Bear Hill) | | * | | + | + | l | b | |
| 13. Kimowin/Garson River<br>Wa-pe-sue a Seepe or<br>Caw-coos a Dez-za or<br>Swan River | | * | | - | + | w | b | |

Table 4-2 cont'd

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. Lac la Biche<br>Red Deers River | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? |
| 15. La Biche River<br>Red Deers River or<br>Brook | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? |
| 16. Lac Isle a la Crosse<br>Lac Isle a la Crosse | * | * | + | + | + | w | t |
| 17. La Loche River<br>Loach River or<br>Methy-a-Seepe or<br>Methy River or<br>Thent-he-le Dez-za | * | * | + | + | + | w | b |
| 18. Portage La Loche<br>Portage la Loche or<br>Methy Portage | * | * | + | + | + | l | b |
| 19. Lac la Loche<br>Loach Lake or<br>Methy Lake | * | * | + | + | + | w | b |
| 20. Meadow Lake<br>Barren Ground Lake or<br>Meadow Lake | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? |
| 21. Moose Lake<br>Moose hill Lake or<br>Moose Lake | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? |
| 22. Mooselake River<br>Moose Lake Creek or<br>Moose River | * | * | + | + | ? | w | n/t? |
| 23. Peace River<br>Peace River or<br>Beaver Indian River or<br>Chau-hot-e-na Dez-za or<br>Unjigah | * | * | + | + | + | w | b |
| 24. Peter Pond Lake<br>Mis-toose Sack-a-ha-gan<br>or<br>A-gid-da Too-ah or<br>Buffalo Lake | * | * | + | + | - | w | b |

Table 4-2 cont'd

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. Shagwenaw Lake<br>Showenaw Lake | * | | | + | - | w | n/t |
| 26. Slave River<br>Arch-a-thin-nee Seepe<br>or<br>Wan-con Seepe or<br>Bess-chow Dezza or<br>Great Slave River | * | * | + | + | + | w | b |

Column and Symbol Explanation
#1 name used by David Thompson=*
#2 name used by Peter Fidler=*
#3 if name is used by both Thompson and Fidler is there a positive (+) or negative (-) correlation between the names
#4 positive (+) or negative (-) correlation between these names and the current official name for the feature
#5 positive (+) or negative (-) correlation between these names and the native language
#6 water (w) or land (l) feature
#7 names are tranlated (t), non-translated (n/t), or both (b)

In total the names for 55 distinct geographical features were examined, 29[230] in the southern section and 26 in the northern one. When looked at separately David Thompson recorded a name or names for 13 features in the southern section and 22 features in the north, while Peter Fidler recorded names for 27 features in the south and 25 in the north. As can be expected with any work involving the collection of data by individuals working independent of each other, the likelihood that one would gather information (or in this case record a name) that the other missed should logically not exceed 10 to 15% of the total number of names gathered[231]. Table 4-3 is a representation of the degree to which either Thompson or Fidler recorded a name for a feature while the

other did not. In general terms this table appears to show that Peter Fidler's work in the southern section was more comprehensive than that of David Thompson. Taking into consideration the fact that the figures for the northern section fall within the expected range, a plausible explanation is that the figure of 55% represents not a personal or professonal difference between Thompson and Fidler but is simply a reflection of the relative length of time that each surveyor spent in the southern area. As noted in the third chapter David Thompson spent less time than Peter Fidler conducting surveys on the grassland plains of the Western Interior. The data for the thesis were therefore analysed on an equitable basis with neither surveyor's work being given greater weight than the other.

Table 4-3 Comparison of data gathered by Thompson and Fidler

| | South | North |
|---|---|---|
| Number (and percentage[232]) of features for which David Thompson recorded a name and Peter Fidler did not. | 2 of 29 (7%) | 1 of 26 (4%) |
| Number (and percentage[233]) of features for which Peter Fidler recorded a name and David Thompson did not. | 16 of 29 (55%) | 4 of 26 (15%) |

Table 4-4 is included here to illustrate the relative degree to which the geographical names recorded by Thompson and Fidler, both in the north and south, have 'survived' through to the present. The term 'survive' is used in this context to acknowledge the fact that names do change with time. The evolution of names is closely tied to changes in man's utilization of a region. The figures shown in Table 4-4 tend to confirm

this observation. Eighty-five percent of those names recorded by Thompson and Fidler in the northern section have remained unchanged through more than 160 years. In contrast only half of those recorded in the southern section have survived.

Table 4-4 Correlation Between the Names Recorded by Thompson and Fidler and the Current Official Name

| | South | North |
|---|---|---|
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features for which the names recorded by Thompson and Fidler have have a direct relationship[234] with the current official name for the feature (i.e. their 'survival rate'). | 15 of 29 (52%) | 22 of 26 (85%) |
| 'Survival rate' for names recorded by David Thompson | 5 of 13 (38%) | 19 of 22 (86%) |
| 'Survival rate' for names recorded by Peter Fidler | 15 of 27 (56%) | 17 of 25 (68%) |

When these two areas are compared with regard to their history of European settlement and land use it is clear that the northern section has not undergone the intensity or scope of change that has occurred in the south. The parklands and grassland plains of western Canada experienced a major influx of European settlers beginning in the 1880s. These settlers were either not aware of many of the established names for geographical features or deliberately chose to ignore these names in favour of ones which more closely reflected their own values and perceptions.

In contrast to this, we still see what we have come to view as traditional native ways of life, such as hunting, fishing, and

trapping, continuing as major realities in the north after hundreds of years of European contact, but limited permanent residence. The continuity of the region's population is a major contibuting factor in the stability of names so apparent in Table 4-4.

The north-south differences between the relative survival of Thompson and Fidler's geographical names probably came about for much more subtle reasons. As illustrated in Table 4-3 Fidler recorded, in the south, more than twice the number of names that Thompson recorded and it therefore should not be surprising that more of Fidler's names have survived. Another factor, which lies outside the scope of this thesis, may well have been the relative extent to which Thompson's and Fidler's manuscript maps were used later in the compilation of maps for public use, by cartographers such as the Arrowsmiths. This transferral process is a major factor in the 'survival' and stabilization of geographical names. The greater awareness people have of geographical names the less likely it is that those names will change.

The following table (4-5) is a graphic representation of the degree to which both Thompson and Fidler recorded native names for geographical features in the areas which they surveyed. In only one instance did David Thompson use a name which was given by non-natives (in this instance by 'Canadians') without also referring to the Indian name for the feature. This feature, the Peace River, was noted by Peter Fidler both by this name and also as "Chau-hot-e-na Dez-za", a Chipewyan name meaning "Beaver Indian River". Another example that does not appear to fit the general trend in naming is the Churchill

River. Although Fidler and Thompson both use this name they appear to have favoured the Cree name "Missinnippe" over Churchill.

Table 4-5 Correlation Between the Names Recorded by Thompson and Fidler and the Native Language of the Area

| | South | North |
|---|---|---|
| Number (and percentage) of the total number of features for which Native language derivation[235] of the name(s) can be proven. | 26 of 29 (90%) | 18 of 26 (69%) |
| Number (and percentage) of the total number of features for which the derivation[236] could not be proven. | 3 of 29 (10%) | 8 of 26 (31%) |
| Number (and percentage) of the total number of features for which the European roots of the name(s) could be proven | 0%[237] | 0%[237] |

The overwhelming tendency, as illustrated in Table 4-5, is for the names of features, in both the north and south sections, to be derived from the native language or languages of the area. Nine out of ten named features in the south and almost seven out of ten names in the north can be traced directly to the native language. The remaining one in ten and three in ten named features respectively cannot be traced to either native or European roots. This small number of names of unknown derivation all fall within the category of descriptive names, being either descriptive of the feature, as with "Deep Brook" in the southern section, or descriptive of local wildlife as with "Moose Lake" in the northern section. Since all the names of features for which proof of native origin was obtained also are descriptive in

nature it is likely that the names in this unproven category are also of native origin.

Table 4-5 indicates a very strong relationship between all the names examined in this thesis and the native people of the Western Interior. A logical follow-through to this table would be an examination of the form in which these native names were recorded by David Thompson and Peter Fidler. Table 4-6 is a further breakdown of the figures given on the first line of Table 4-5, This table (4-6) divides the 26 southern and 18 northern names for which native origins could be proven into the three possible ways in which they could have been recorded; translated, non-translated, or both.

Table 4-6 Forms of Names Recorded by Thompson and Fidler

| | South | North |
|---|---|---|
| Number (and percentage) of the total number of features for which the native names were recorded only in the Native language. | 16 of 26 (62%) | 3 of 18 (17%) |
| Number (and percentage) of the total number of features for which the Native names were recorded only in the translated form[238] | 3 of 26 (11%) | 3 of 18 (17%) |
| Number (and percentage) of the total number of features for which the Native names were recorded in both translated and non-translated forms. | 7 of 26 (27%) | 12 of 18 (66%) |

The most obvious difference between the northern and southern sections is that in the north nearly two thirds of the native names were recorded in both their translated and non-translated forms[239]

with only one in six recorded in either Native only or translated forms. In direct contrast to this is the fact that in the southern section nearly two-thirds of the names were recorded in the native form, one in four in both forms and one in ten in the translated form only.

These figures would tend to indicate that there were differences in the degree to which Thompson and Fidler, and perhaps the fur-traders in general, had mastered the Indian languages of the Interior. Seventeen percent of the northern features had names recorded only in the native language while sixty-two percent of the southern features had names recorded in this form. This would suggest that the native languages of the north -Cree, Chipewyan, Slavey, and Beaver- were well known to the fur-traders and surveyors who could readily translate them into English or French for inclusion on maps. In contrast, with nearly two thirds of the names recorded in the south being only phonetic approximations of the native name, a certain lack of ability on the part of the surveyor to translate the native words is indicated. These results would tend to confirm the belief that the fur-traders of this time period spent very little time among the hostile tribes of the southern grasslands.

The last remaining aspect of the named features examined in both the northern and southern sections has to do with the types of geographical features being named. Table 4-7 gives a breakdown by area and surveyor of the relative number of water features compared to land features. The general tendency indicated by this table is that regardless of the relative location of surveys, Thompson and Fidler

collectively recorded four times more names for water features than for land features. This general tendency also persists when each surveyor is looked at individually.

Table 4-7 Types of Geographical Features for Which Thompson and Fidler Have Recorded Names

| | South | North |
|---|---|---|
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features that are creeks, rivers, or lakes. | 23 of 29 (79%) | 23 of 26 (88%) |
| Creeks and Rivers | 19 of 23 (83%) | 11 of 23 (48%) |
| Lakes | 4 of 23 (17%) | 12 of 23 (52%) |
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features that are land features. | 6 of 29 (21%) | 3 of 26 (12%) |
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features recorded by David Thompson that are creeks, rivers, or lakes | 12 of 13 (92%) | 20 of 22 (91%) |
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features recorded by David Thompson that are land features. | 1 of 13 (8%) | 2 of 22 (9%) |
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features recorded by Peter Fidler that are creeks, rivers, or lakes. | 21 of 27 (78%) | 22 of 25 (88%) |
| Number (and percentage) of total number of features recorded by Peter Fidler that are land features. | 6 of 27 (22%) | 3 of 25 (12%) |

When the water features are further divided between flowing and non-flowing bodies of water[240] then we see a marked contrast between

the northern and southern sections. In the north there is a roughly equal split between the numbers of flowing and non-flowing water features for which names were recorded. In the southern section there is approximately a four-to-one ratio of creeks and rivers over lakes. This may simply be a reflection of the relative number of streams compared to lakes, while it is more likely a reflection of the fact that in the south few lakes exist as parts of navigable water courses. There was also the tendency in the south for the fur trader and native traveller to rely far less on the water courses as routes of navigation as direct overland movement was not impeded by forests. This tendency would logically lead one to expect that more land features might be named in the south than actually was the case. Although this may be partially attributable to surveyor bias towards mapping these types of features, a more likely explanation is that although the rivers and streams of the south were not used to any great extent as means of travel, they were used as points of reference while travelling on foot or horse across the often featureless plains.

ENDNOTES

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4. C.C. Uhlenbeck and R.H. Van Gulik, An English-Blackfoot Vocabulary, Uitgave Van De Koninklijke Akademie, Van Wetenschappen Te Amsterdam, 1930, p.24.

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6. David Thompson, "Map of the North-West Territory of the Province of Canada From Actual Survey during the years 1792 to 1812" as reproduced in David Thompson's Narrative edited by J. B. Tyrrell, Champlain Society, Toronto, 1916.

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9. Fidler, "Indian Map drawn by the Feathers or Ak ko mock ki", op. cit.

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11. George M. Dawson, "Blackfoot Names of a Number of Places in the North-West Territory" Appendix II of Report on the Region in the Vicinity of the Bow and Belly Rivers N.W.T. in Reports of Progress 1882-83-84 Geological and Natural History Survey and Museum of Canada, Dawson Bros. Montreal, 1885, p.158c.

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21. Thomas Heron, Report on District for Chesterfield House 1822-23, HBC B34/e/1, n.p.

22. James Bird, A Short Account of Edmonton District 1815, HBC B60/e/1, n.p.

23. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

24. Fidler, Journal of a Journey..., op. cit., n.p.

25. Turnor, "Hudson's Bay...", op. cit.

26. Peter Fidler, "Indian map drawn by Ki oo cus or the Little Bear a Blackfoot Chief 1802", Journal of Exploration and Survey 1789-1804, HBC E3/2, folios 104d and 105.

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28. Dawson, op. cit., p.165c.

29. Geographic Board of Canada, op. cit., p.26.

30. Anderson, op. cit.

31. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

32. Fidler, Journal of a Journey..., op. cit., n.p.

33. Ulhenbeck and Van Gulik, op. cit., p.46.

34. Dawson, op. cit., p.163c.

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38. Geographic Board of Canada, op. cit., p.39.

39. Ibid.

40. Peter Fidler, Chesterfield House Journal 1801-2, HBC B34/a/1, n.p.

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42. Ulhenbeck and Van Gulik, op. cit., p.34.

43. Fidler, "Indian Map drawn by the Feathers or Ak ko mock ki", op. cit.

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54. Dawson, op. cit., p.164c.

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73. Dempsey, op. cit.

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78. Fisher, Rocky Mountain House Journal 1828-29, op. cit., n.p.

79. Fisher, Rocky Mountain House Journal 1829-30, op. cit., n.p.

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81. Dempsey, op. cit.

82. Dawson, op. cit., p.158c.

83. Fidler, "Indian Map drawn by the Feathers or Ak ko mock ki", op. cit.

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148. Ibid.

149. Robert Kennedy, Lesser Slave Lake Report on District 1819-20, HBC B115/e/1, p.3.

150. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit.

151. Turnor, "1778-9 map", op. cit.

152. Turnor, "1795 map", op. cit.

153. Anderson, op. cit.

154. A.R. Cameron, "The Legacy of the Fur Trade" Saskatchewan History, Vol.1, No.3, Autumn, 1948, p.21.

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156. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

157. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit.

158. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

159. Pond, "1785 map", op. cit.

160. Pond, "1787 map", op. cit.

161. Anderson, op. cit.

162. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

163. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

164. Turnor, "Hudson's Bay...", op. cit.

165. Pond, "1787 map", op. cit.

166. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

167. Brown, op. cit.

168. Turnor, "1779-9 map", op. cit.

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170. Turnor, "1778-9 map", op. cit.

171. Turnor, "1794 map", op. cit.

172. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

173. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

174. Mackenzie, op. cit.

175. Turnor, "Hudson's Bay...", op. cit.

176. Ross, Malcolm, Lake Athabasca Post Journal 1790-1792, HBC B9/a/1, n.p.

177. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

178. Peter Fidler, "Drawn by Old Pumbles 10th June 1810" Journal of Exploration and Survey, 1809, HBC E3/4, folio 11.

179. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

180. Anderson, op. cit.

181. Turnor, "1794 map", op. cit.

182. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

183. Anderson, op. cit.

184. Turnor, "1778-9 map", op. cit.

185. Mackenzie, op. cit.

186. David Thompson, Book No. 10 Journey from falls of St. Mary to Grande Portage and to the Red Deer's Lake 1798-99. (H.S.S. copy).

187. Fidler, Peter, Lac La Biche Post Journal 1799-1800, HBC B104/a/1, n.p.

188. Kennedy, op. cit.

189. Cameron, op. cit., p.22.

190. Pond, "1787 map", op. cit.

191. Turnor, "1794 map", op. cit.

192. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

193. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

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195. Anderson, op. cit.

196. Pond, "1785 map", op. cit.

197. Turnor, "1778-9 map", op. cit.

198. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

199. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

200. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

201. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

202. Thompson, "Journey from falls of St. Mary . . ." op. cit.

203. Fidler, Lac La Biche Post Journal 1799-1800, op. cit., n.p.

204. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

205. Thompson, "Journey from falls of St. Mary . . ." op. cit.

206. Geographic Board of Canada, op. cit., p.89.

207. Ross, op. cit, p.21.

208. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

209. Pond, "1785 map", op. cit.

210. Pond, "1787 map", op. cit.

211. Turnor, "1778-9 map", op. cit.

212. Mackenzie, op. cit.

213. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

214. Geographic Board of Canada, op. cit., p.100.

215. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., folio 54d.

216. Anderson, op. cit.

217. Pond, "1785 map", op. cit.

218. Pond, "1787 map", op. cit.

219. Turnor, "1778-9 map", op. cit.

220. Turnor, "1794 map", Op. cit.

221. Anderson, Op. cit.

222. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

223. Ibid.

224. Anderson, op. cit.

225. Fidler, Journal of Exploration and Survey 1790-1806, op. cit., n.p.

226. Anderson, op. cit.

227. Thompson, "Map of the North-west Territory...", op. cit.

228. Geographic Board of Canada, op. cit., p.116

229. * indicates that the name was recorded.

230. The Belly and lower Oldman Rivers were recorded as separate features by Fidler while Thompson recorded them as one feature. They have been listed in Table 4-1 as one feature but analysed as two.

231. This number is based on present day experience in name gathering by the Staff of Alberta Culture's Geographical Names Programme.

232. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{total number of names - number recorded by Fidler}}{\text{total number of names}} \times 100$$

233. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{total number of names - number recorded by Thompson}}{\text{total number of names}} \times 100$$

234. Are either the same name, a portion of that name, or a translation of the name.

235. The name is either recorded in the Native language (Romanized); is recorded in both translation and the original form; or is a translation for which proof has been determined from outside of Thompson or Fidler material.

236. Either European or Native.

237. Names such as Peace River and Churchill River were of European origin but were also used in conjunction with their native names.

238. The evidence for the name being a translation of a native name would therefore have come from sources other than Thompson or Fidler.

239. See as an example of this type of naming the writeup for Christina River.

240. Creeks and rivers vs. lakes.

## Chapter 5

## CONCLUSION

The preceding Tables (4-3 to 4-7), and the discussion that follows each, clearly indicate that the names of geographical features within the area of study, that were used by the fur-traders between 1780 and 1820, were derived from the native languages of those areas. These tables also indicate the 'survival rate' for these names; the form in which the names were recorded; and the types of features for which names were recorded. In this respect the hypotheses, as stated in Chapter 1, are considered to have been proven correct. What remains unanswered is the question of why the fur-traders chose to use the existing geographical names of the Western Interior and how these native names were obtained from the native people.

### Proposed Names Transfer Mechanism

The native people of the Western Interior of British North America, at the time of first contact by Europeans, and to a certain extent throughout the fur-trade era, led a nomadic way of life. The Amerindians of the northern forests moved from place to place in search of areas for fishing and for hunting large game animals such as moose, caribou, deer, and wood bison. The Amerindians who occupied the grasslands to the south followed the seasonal migrations of large herds of plains bison.

A nomadic lifestyle would, by its very nature, require a well

developed and extensive knowledge of the geography of the Western Interior. This knowledge is reflected in the general accuracy of the small scale maps drawn by natives for Peter Fidler[1] and also in the detail shown in the larger scale maps drawn for him by northern Indians. The geographical knowledge would by necessity also include a well developed system of geographical nomenclature. The simplest form that this labelling could take was one based either on a description of the feature itself or of the flora and fauna found in association with the feature. For the purposes of this thesis the assumption has been made that this system of native geographical names had evolved beyond the stage of simply being descriptions of geographical features to being actual labels more or less permanently affixed to these features. Although there is evidence from Fidler's surveys in the northern section that different tribes of Indians had different descriptive names for features there is no evidence that different Indians within the same tribe used different descriptive names for the same feature.

With the relatively rapid influx of fur traders into the Western Interior during the last two decades of the 1700s and the first two of the 1800s the problem of the Europeans' lack of knowledge concerning the geography of the area was solved, as discussed in Chapter 3, by employing surveyors to map the region. This mapping occurred in conjunction with the ongoing trade and involved not only direct observation of the location and form of geographical features but also the questioning of those individuals who possessed knowledge of distant geographical features. Those individuals included both the

nomadic native inhabitants of the region and also, to a certain extent, other fur traders who had preceded the surveyors. Regardless of the source of the information it is clear from the analysis of the data gathered that in almost every instance the geographical name can be traced to the native people of the region.

The means by which fur traders and surveyors became familiar with the native names for geographical features had to have come about through communication between the two groups. This communication would have taken place on two levels: (1) direct communication, which would have necessitated learning the native language, or,(2) through Metis middlemen. Some recent scholars[2] have emphasised the role of the Metis or Mixed-Bloods as mediators between the fur-trader and the Indian. Part of this mediator roll must certainly have involed the transfer of geographical knowledge from the Indian to the Fur-trader.

Once knowledge of the location, size, extent, presence of game and in particular the name of the geographical feature had been gained, the choice had to be made as to the form in which to record the name. It could be recorded either as (1) a representation of the sound of the native word, (2) a translation of the native word into English or French, or, (3) in both forms. Table 4-6 clearly shows the lack of consistency in the recording of names by the surveyors. The question remains not only as to why this lack of consistency occurred but also why the fur-trader chose to adopt an Amerindian system of geographical nomenclature rather than developing one of their own. The answer to both these questions lies in the fact that the fur-traders were very few in number compared to the native population and were very much

dependent upon the native people for 'the trade'. If the fur-trader had consciously decided to ignore the local names for geographical features there would have been obvious communication problems between the natives and the traders. Being so few in number the fur-traders could not possibly have hoped to influence the native people in adopting new names for features. The simpest solution to the problem was to use the native name. It is unlikely that the fur-traders saw any problem in using native names; they simply did what was both logical and best for 'the trade'. While one might question the logic behind having to learn a language simply to understand geographical names it was not for that reason that the fur-trader learned the native language: proficiency in the Native tongue was necessary for communication and thus necessary for 'the trade'.

While it is likely that many of the fur-traders were conversant in local native tongues this was likely not true of their superiors either in Britain or back in Canada. The surveyor was expected to produce maps that could be understood by people who were unfamiliar with the native languges and we thus see maps and reports from this period of time that contain both native names and their translations. This is well illustrated in Table 4-6. A logical question at this point would be "why both?" Why not simply produce maps and reports containing only translations of native names? The answer to this probably lies in the degree to which the fur-traders knew and used native languages. There is considerable evidence throughout the literature that the traders had to be well versed in the native tongues of the Western Interior in order to trade with the natives.

This duality of language is reflected in a duality of geographical name forms on maps and in reports.

In very basic terms we see that the fur-trader was dependent upon both the geographical knowledge, which included geographical names, and the language of the native people of the Western Interior in order to carry out the trade in an efficient manner. A direct offshoot of this dependency was the use of native place-names.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The most obvious question raised by this thesis is that if the fur-traders adopted the native geographical nomenclature of the Western Interior during the period of time from 1780 to 1820 did they also adopt native geographical names during the periods of time both before and after these four decades? Prior to the 1780s the Western Interior had not been well explored and the records of that cursory exploration left a great deal to one's imagination. It was not until the 1780s, with the influx of traders employed by the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, that we see systematic record keeping concerning the geography of the area. The period of time after the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821 saw a sudden decrease in the exploration and surveying of the Western Interior. In this respect the geographical data required for a study of this type is not available although it is likely that other sources of data could be found.

Another question which could be examined in light of the results

of this study concerns the manner and time at which the naming practices of the fur-traders changed from that in which only native names were used for geographical features to one in which names were derived from other sources.

Endnotes

1. see Map 4-7.
2. see Arthur Ray's Indians in the Fur Trade...

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# APPENDIX 1

Peter Fidler

Born in England in 1769 Peter Fidler was hired by the Hudson's Bay Company as a labourer in 1788. In the summer of 1790 he received instruction in surveying from Philip Turnor and that fall accompanied Turnor into the Athabasca country. Fidler succeeded Turnor as Chief Surveyor for the Company in 1792 and spent much of the next two decades conducting surveys in the Western Interior until his death in 1822.

David Thompson

Born in 1770 in England David Thompson was apprenticed to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1784. He also received instruction in surveying from Philip Turnor. Thompson remained with the Hudson's Bay Company until 1787 when he joined the North-West Company as their Chief Surveyor. He retired from the N.W. Company in 1812, spending the next two years preparing his now famous map of Western Canada. Thompson died in Montreal in 1857.

Philip Turnor

Very little is known of Turnor's background. He was probably born during the early 1750s and died in 1799. He was the first individual to be employed by the Hudson's Bay Company as a Surveyor and is known to have conducted surveys in the Western Interior from 1778 through to 1792.

Peter Pond

Born in Connecticut in 1740 Peter Pond made his first expedition into the Western Interior in 1775. He established the first post in the Athabasca country in 1778 and became a partner in the North West Company in 1783. After selling his shares in the Company in 1790 he returned to the United States and is believed to have died in 1807.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie

Born in 1764 on the Island of Lewis Alexander Mackenzie emigrated with his parents to New York in 1774. In 1785 he became a wintering partner for Gregory, McLeod, and Co. which was absorbed by the North West Company in 1787. In 1788 he was placed in charge of Fort Chipewyan and in 1789 made his famous expedition to the Arctic Ocean. In 1793 he also mounted an expedition to the Pacific Ocean. Mackenzie left the North West Company in 1799 and formed the rival XY Company in 1802. In 1808 he returned to Scotland and died in 1820.